# FAMILY SECRETS.

BY

MR. PRATT.

VOL. V.

[redacted]

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*IN FIVE VOLUMES.*

VOL. V.

Once more I aſcend,
To urge the Juſtice, whoſe almighty word
Meaſures the bloody acts of impious men,
With equal penance.

CHAPMAN.

THE SECOND EDITION,

CAREFULLY REVISED.

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TO

## JOHN FONBLANQUE, Esq.

COMMON place ſatire, and panegyrick, ſhould be enumerated amongſt the VULGAR ERRORS, which, more or leſs, disfigure the good-ſenſe and candour of every country. A number of theſe, more eſpecially of the former, attach to our own: and of all common place cenſure, that which is thrown, in the lump, upon profeſſional men, is the moſt illiberal and pernicious. The very names of Prieſt and Lawyer—the one ordained to inculcate divine and eternal laws—the other appointed to adminiſter a code of human juſtice founded upon thoſe—can ſcarcely be mentioned without affixing thereto unmanly epithets. Theſe are extended even to modes of faith; concerning which men are divided in opinion: and as chriſtian dog, hypocritical catholick, heretick proteſtant, are retorted on the one hand; knaviſh Iſraelite,

ſenſual Mahomedan, are recriminated on the other. The generous will look on it all as the dark ſhadow of prejudice; the illuſtrious will diſpel it as a vapour diſſolved by the ſun. Yet popular ideas are a kind of moral epidemies; they may be claſſed amongſt the catching diſorders of our childhood. The cradle is ſcarcely exempt. The nurſery breathes the contagion; mixing with all that we ſee, and hear, and taſte. We imbibe falſe opinions, even with our maternal nouriſhment: the tender parent, while ſupporting the life ſhe gave, infuſes them with her kiſs. The infant liſps in prejudice; and voice no ſooner forms itſelf into language, than it begins to expreſs that prejudice. In the parlour it gains ſtrength; and deſcending into the kitchen, grows into a ſize ſo enormous, that neither the diſcipline of ſchools, nor the precepts of the written page, can wholly root it out. It is thus that the infant mind goes diſtempered into the world, and collecting force as it goes, from the power of habit and of example, the ſpreading malady has in-

infected the world itſelf. Hence prejudices are to be ranked in the number of our FIRST IMPRESSIONS ; and like moſt of thoſe, are indelible : for if intellect matured, and ſentiment liberalized, efface ſome, others will remain. The parrot, the pie, and other imitative birds, may be eaſily brought to run the routine of vulgar abuſe,– and, with as little difficulty, they may learn a chime of virtuous epithets ; but who ſhall teach them to forget either the one or the other ? The bad, and the good, mix in their ſenſeleſs vocabulary, yet form idioms and language nearly as wiſe and generous, as thoſe which are adopted by the chattering echoes of ſociety, who call knave and fool on a like *parroted* principle.

In ſincere hope, that ſomething may be added to the arguments againſt the unfair practice of involving large bodies of reſpectable men in the crimes of individual members, the author has endeavoured to paint the virtues of men of different perſuaſions and purſuits, giving to each the force of a living inſtance.

Of the three brothers, whofe characters are amongft the moft prominent objects of this work, one has been difcriminated by integrity, firmnefs, and philofophick energy of mind; accompanied with tendernefs of heart. Another, by the aid of fterling talents and all-fubduing perfeverance, diftinguifhed himfelf for found principles, a found underftanding, and as a found lawyer.

As a member of that dignified profeffion, which defines and maintains the rights of focial beings, and as a man—his private friends and the publick are fully competent to decide, how far the Gentleman, whofe name appears at the head of this volume, is properly chofen to illuftrate the above-mentioned traits in the characters of John and James Fitzorton.

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# FAMILY SECRETS.

## CHAPTER I.

### A LITTLE HORSE.

THE morning greetings, however, atoned for the deficiencies of the farewell negative. The Colonel joined them at early breakfaſt, and while they were yet partaking, and converſing over it, with thoſe renewed ſpirits which temporary death returning to blameleſs life generally beſtows, ſeveral little agreeable events happened in ſucceſſion. The indefatigable apothecary paying his morning devoir, ſaid that the truſty Jonathan, who had been the watch of the night, had with giant ſtrides already given in a favourable report of his patient, that Jerom had relieved guard at the fourth hour, and that therefore the good fellow thought it beſt to take the news to Brixham before he went to reſt.

"You muſt know, ladies," ſaid Burton, "Jonathan thought we ſhould all ſleep the better after it"—My Sally overheard this account, for the giant has a marvellous good voice, and though ſhe was yet in bed, ſhe cried out to her ſiſter,—who is her bed-fellow:—Do you hear that, Heſter? God bleſs the bearer. Yes, ſo ſay I, God bleſs Jerom for that, cries Heſter, waking.

"Aye, you have been dreaming about my Jerom, I ſuppoſe," anſwered Sally, "but the news happens to be brought by my Jonathan." "Well, don't quarrel about it," vollied Jonathan, "there's my pretty laſſes, couſin Jerom ſhall bring the next account, and then we ſhall expect a kiſs a-piece and double it." This produced a hearty laugh both above and below ſtairs. I ſkipped up and made dear oldiſh wife laugh too—the giant then tucked him in a truckle in the back parlour, where, as I may ſay, he and Jerom ride and tie in ſleep, as they take turn and turn, as Sir Guiſe's nurſery men, as I call them;—the girls got his meſs of milk ready by the

the time he waked, wife took t'other nap, and here am I come for my cup of comfort, and ſlice of converſation. But, odſo, time will not ſtop a moment, although we are often enough obliged to wait years for him,—that is, for the merry-time,—ſo as your faces have declared the ſtate of your pulſes, my good friends—"

"O yes," interpoſed John, as Burton was going round, "as *all's well*, no more need be ſaid on the ſubject."

The ladies interpreted the arch look to which the *all's well* applied, and laugh'd almoſt as much as the apothecary's daughters and the giant: and then Burton, the beſt natured of living beings, joined in chorus, without having any other reaſon for it than the genuine joy he had in ſeeing his friends joyful. He then ſet off to viſit Olivia's cottages in his way to the abbey.

Scarce had the apothecary reached his firſt pauſing place, ere a pacquet was delivered to Mrs. Fitzorton, who with extatick accents, cried out, almoſt the moment of receiving it,—"From my dear,

dear Henry!"—She bowed for permiſſion to read, and was opening the letter while ſhe bowed. Her ſatisfied heart panted to communicate, and John auguring from her happineſs, that *all was well* too in that quarter, did not check her. "You know all about Henry,—only hear," ſaid ſhe, proceeding immediately with the contents.

'Although, my deareſt Olivia, I have 'thus been trepanned by the kidnapper 'Partington, who has been abuſing me 'ever ſince I became his priſoner,—I ex- 'pect he will be tired of calling me names, 'in a week or two at moſt, when I will fly 'to her whoſe happineſs is the ſole ſtudy 'of my life. Let me hear from you I in- 'treat. Were not our dear Johns, both 'little and great, your inmates, I ſhould 'really be angry with mine hoſt for ſteal- 'ing me away at this criſis of your tender 'and intereſting expectations. Dear Carry 'is well, and ſends love: Gaffer and Gam- 'mer Atwood the ſame: Jonathan and 'Jerom are from home; we ſuppoſe with

'their

'their sweet-hearts at the apothecary's. 'Again, and again, adieu.'

'Partington scolds for himself.'

"You are, perhaps, unacquainted with Mr. Partington's humour, and might therefore think him," said Mrs. Fitzorton, "one of the most ill-mannered men in the world, whereas, he is one of the most friendly, and most blameless, and only scolds those whom he loves."

"We have often heard of him," said Mrs. Herbert. Olivia then gave to their perusal the following curious postscript to Henry's letter.

'DEAR ABOMINABLE!

'Your good-for-nothing husband can 'scarcely be with-held from leaving me 'already. I must have him chained, like 'other puppies, to prevent his running 'home before I have done with him;— 'and the young villain his daughter begins 'to whimper after mammy too,—I will 'tie the rascal by the leg, as I would 'a singing

'a ſinging bird.—But, after all, you are 'the moſt atrocious caitiff for witching 'them away. Diſſolve your ſpells, or uſe 'them to bind the refractory fellow to 'this ſpot, till I am weary of him, which, 'as he rightly ſays, I ſhall ſoon be, or elſe 'I'll have you burned witch-faſhion. 'Your's, as you deport yourſelf,

'B. PARTINGTON.'

"The gentleman is a humouriſt," cried Mrs. Herbert, ſmiling.

"Surely it is very unnatural," ſaid Johanna, "to abuſe one's beſt friends."

"Perhaps, you would think it more ſo to hear him laviſh praiſe on his worſt enemies," obſerved Olivia, "which he does invariably."

"That is more unnatural ſtill," exclaimed Johanna.

"Not, my little wonderer," ſaid the Colonel, "if you were to ſee the look, and hear the voice in which he addreſſes both."

"Still 'tis unnatural," added Johanna.

"Rather

"Rather ſay it is ſingular, for 'tis in nature, I aſſure you: we are very apt," remarked Olivia, "to call that unnatural, which never came within our obſervation.—O, but here's a little nota-bene for you Colonel."

Being in the letter to Olivia, John knew it might be read aloud. He therefore heard what follows.—'Tell the inſufferable Colonel John, to take heed—ſat: ſap:—a word to fooliſh fellows is enough.'

"O, but if you knew," ſaid John, warmly, "as we know this ſcurrilous being!—if you knew that he hath in his heart no enmity but for vice, no friendſhip but for virtue: that his oaths are aſperities on the ſurface, and ſeem like ſmall knots on the bark of the oak, mere idle peeling, but the heart is ſound and good to the bottom,—you would think of, and love him as we do."

"I love him in your report," ſaid Mrs. Herbert.

"Pray, dear Sir," queſtioned Johanna, "do

"do you think there is any chance that I ſhall come in for a ſhare of his ſcurrility?"

"If you go on improving, I think you may hope," anſwered John.

"O yes, depend on it," obſerved Mrs. Fitzorton, "you will be one of his moſt abominable little caitiffs."

This ſort of chat went on for ſome time, and thoſe who ſuſtained it were thereby more familiarized and endeared to each other. It was then propoſed that while Olivia withdrew to write to Henry, Little John and Jane Atwood ſhould ſhew the park and gardens to her amiable gueſts; the Colonel having ſignified his intention to ride to the abbey, after he had ſettled ſome buſineſs with his privy counſellor True George.

## CHAPTER II.

### ENCHANTMENTS.

THE morning ſo generally chearful in the Caſtle, took a different colour at the Abbey: the paſſing hours there had reflected many hues. It was there, indeed, as an April morn, in which a ſudden but ſoft ſucceſſion of cloudings, and ſun-beams—of light ſhowers, with now a dark ſhadow, and now a vivid ray, alternately cleared and obſcured the face of things.

Bright, however, was the beam that, at early dawn, viſited the chamber of Caroline Stuart; for it was uſhered in by tidings that her father had paſſed a better night than any he had enjoyed for many weeks; and that he was ſtill in the arms of ſleep, guarded by Jerom, the nurſe, and one of the female attendants.

Cheared by this intelligence, and not a

little renovated by the ſlumbers into which ſhe had herſelf fallen at intervals, ſhe was at leiſure to attend to ſome of the other circumſtances that accompanied this ſtrange reverſe of fortune. Some of theſe, indeed, were immediately under her eye: ſhe found herſelf once more in the chamber where ſhe herſelf firſt opened her eyes, and where her deareſt mother's were cloſed for ever. Her brother had reported to her, long ſince, that the Abbey was in ruins; that its blooms were all deſtroyed, and that whatever it contained had been, even like the wreck of an inſolvent, variouſly diſperſed; yet ſhe had been repoſing on, probably, the ſame bed, certainly ſurrounded by the ſame furniture, even to the ſlighteſt ornaments, which had graced it in her own natal, and in her poor parent's mortal hour. The very portraits of her grandfather, and of her mother Lady Stuart, then a child, decorated, as before, the chimney-piece. "If the rumour," ſaid ſhe, "of the ſale was not falſe, it muſt ſurely be magic—unleſs—perhaps"—

She hurried from a very tender idea, not

at

at leaft to be encouraged, by going to the window ; but from thence a continuation of fimillar objects ftruck her eye, and penetrated her heart. The chamber which both the mother and daughter had alternately occupied and refigned, was immediately over the flower garden. This, on her throwing up the fafhes, welcomed her return with every fragrance, and regaled her with every florid bloom of the feafon.

" How is all this poffible ?" fighed fhe, " I certainly wake—I certainly fpeak—I certainly move—" One of her women, whom fhe had enjoined to bring reports from her father's room, entered as fhe uttered this. Caroline had half begun a queftion, which fhe broke off by obferving, " it was of no immediate confequence—another time, perhaps, fhe might trouble her with it—and requefted to be left a little."

As her filial terrors began more to fubfide, clofer and acuter recollections thronged to her memory. By a refiftlefs force, and natural approximation, as well

as celerity, her thoughts travelled from the abbey to the caſtle, and back again as faſt.

By nature and by habit firm, ſelf-denying, and ſteady to her principles, ſhe had forborne to mention the names, either of Olivia or Henry, to her brother, even though from his new attachment he might poſſibly have heard them unmoved. But aware that human ſtrength is baby weakneſs, if it inflates us with a daring confidence, or braves temptation, ſhe had avoided every thought, as much as poſſible, that led to Henry Fitzorton.

Incapable, however of change, ſhe could not, like her brother, transfer her feelings, or compromiſe with her heart. She retained her ſentiments of preference, without propoſing, thereby, any idea, but that of carrying to the grave an original impreſſion, unmixt with any image, external or interior, that ſhould debaſe or ſully it; to live in a ſtate of ſinglehood and ſeparation, far from an object who was ſolemnly and for ever diſpoſed of; wiſhing both him and the ſacred being to whom he was bound

all human good in this world, and all bliſs in the next. This comprized the whole plan of her exiſtence; if we add only her unwearied prayers for an alteration in the former purſuits, and conſequent practice, of her father, and her attentive affection to her brother's heart, which, when ſhe found it capable of a change, ſhe conducted, by the moſt gentle and generous means, to that of Johanna.

In the performance of theſe ſeveral duties, and in obſervance of the laws ſhe had herſelf inſtituted, for the government of her own heart, the receſs in which ſhe had paſſed the laſt few years, became, ſhe thought, the moſt proper ſhe could have found. So entirely ſuited, indeed, to her feeling was it, that, ſweetened by friendſhip, and ſoftened by ſympathy, ſhe ardently deſired to remain there, to the remoteſt period of her days.

Summoned, however, at length, by a voice which ſhe would have followed, though it ſhould lead from an earthly paradiſe to the gloom of a dungeon, the voice even

even of nature—breathed from a repentant father—ſhe had again to approach ſcenes and objects, over which it had been the ſolemn buſineſs of her ſoul to draw an oblivious veil. She had long ſeen them in retroſpect— every day added to their diſtance. The piety of Arthur, who pointed to higher proſpects—the reſignation of his ſable attendant, who caught from his maſter's precepts the virtue of ſubmiſſion, even to the eternal loſs of her he had left in the Indian world—and the purity of her own mind, had all a ſhare in quieting her ſpirit, and in directing her ideas. But every thing was ſuddenly and unavoidably brought back. Inanimate and living objects, each intereſting to her heart, encompaſſed her about; and John Fitzorton, relying on the force of her character, had not even made the conqueſt of her former attachment to his brother Henry a queſtion : ſo that many things, which ſhe could not but ſee—which ſhe could not but feel, were wrapt in clouds of myſtery.

Several points however, were palpable, and to theſe her mind, always ſubmiſſive,

turned

turned for relief as often as ſhe could draw it from more uneaſy and perplexing reflections. She again beheld the ſun gilding the ſcenes of her youth. She was reſtored to her father. Her brother's indignant feelings for him were changed to duteous pity. She had again received the careſſes of Olivia. A little choſen band from her former houſehold ſmiled on her commands; and John Fitzorton, whom ſhe had once ſuppoſed the greateſt foe of her houſe, alas! with but too much cauſe, had approved himſelf its nobleſt friend.

Yet even to John Fitzorton, her heart aſſigned not the honours of preſerving to her the ſacred reliques, by which ſhe ſaw herſelf ſurrounded. "Ah!" ſighed ſhe, with a ſoftneſs that thrilled her frame, "if theſe well-remembered objects have ever been diſlodged—by whom were they replaced? My brother, Denniſon, Arthur, and our Indian, were far remote—yet who even knew the particulars, or the appropriate places of all I now ſee in this conſecrated apartment? The inventory can have been taken

taken by no carelefs hand. Yes, facred image of thy blifsful years!" continued fhe, lifting up her eyes to the portrait of her mother, "thou, the prime ornament of all about me—thou did'ft not regain thy ftation here by means of one who was a ftranger to thy virtues, or to their eternal impreffion on thy children:—doubtlefs, my mother, fome friend to us both it was—and bleffed be his name—for ever."

Turning from contemplations which had been forced upon her, fhe opened her door and paffed into feveral of the other apartments. The naked walls, the half rotted cafements, fhaking from their frames—the damps that had lodged in the ceiling, and chilled the floors—the darkfome look of moft of the clofed windows, acrofs which the bars had rufted—and the duft which the winds had beat up, and the froft hardened upon the fafhes which had been left unfaftened—with the woof of the fpider, on which hung obfcenely many a victim, the wily artificer ftill lying perdue in the centre of his fnares:—thefe were all but

fo many confirmations of her former opinion, with refpect to the care which had been taken of her apartment.

At this inftant the Lieutenant appeared at the bottom of the ftaircafe that led to another divifion of the chambers on the eaft fide of the abbey. Caroline ran to him, expreffing a hope that he was comfortably lodged? "Well lodged, my fifter? yes, in truth, too well for a foldier. But the furniture muft be from the caftle; nay, part of it, I think, from Colonel Fitzorton's chambers; I'll fwear to fome of the articles. How did you find your own?" "Too well furnifhed, likewife, confidering all things," faid Caroline; "but not—from—the caftle."

Caroline's hefitation incited the Lieutenant's curiofity; and, without any more queftions, he followed his fifter back to her own apartment. No fooner had Charles caft his eyes around the room, than he exclaimed, "O this can be done only by Henry! I fee him in every circumftance."

In

In a moment he felt Caroline's hand tremble within his own, and a cold paleneſs came over her face, like that of death—yet expelled as ſuddenly by a burning bluſh. "Pardon, ah pardon, my cruel raſhneſs," cried Charles, "but I thought—" She preſſed his hand kindly, and, elaborating a ſmile, hoped he would attend her to Sir Guiſe. He obeyed in ſilence; yet her agitation both diſtreſſed and ſurpriſed him.

We muſt explain this. Altho' it had been a ſettled point with Caroline, never to aſſiſt in reviving the image of Olivia, by mention of her name before Charles, even after ſhe had reaſon to believe his affections had taken another bent; he had been equally circumſpect, only while he felt an equal conſciouſneſs of the mighty powers that aſſociate with the name of a beloved object. When his gliding heart had once deviated from the point at which, as is common to all lovers, he thought it would fix for ever, he not only ſpoke of Henry and Olivia, with leſs and leſs irreſolution, but even called Johanna his ſecond Olivia, either

either from her real or fancied refemblance to that lady; and as Caroline had never teftified, or at leaft as he had never noticed, any confufion fimilar to what he now obferved; he prefumed there lay no more danger in the name of Henry, than he himfelf found in that of Olivia: fo prone are we to judge the feelings of others by our own. Alas, the Lieutenant wholly forgot the different conformation of human minds. The young, the delicate, the interefting Johanna, had taught him, indeed, to forget every thing fave herfelf; but had he confulted the great painter of minds, he would have known, that altho' he had adopted the advice of the merry-hearted Mercutio, by taking 'a new infection to his mind,' by the force of 'which the poifon of the old had died,' his lefs mutable fifter, who, though fhe gave her forrows no voice, nor, at a diftance from their fource, fcarce knew herfelf how deeply that fource was feated;—might in a nearer advance to objects long unfeen—and ftudioufly fhunned—and at fuch a crifis of her

ſoftened thoughts—feel as if the name of Henry

'Shot from the deadly level of a gun
'Had murdered her.'

Finding her agitation increaſe, as ſhe walked along, ſhe begged the Lieutenant would leave her a few moments to herſelf; but catching his hand eagerly, before ſhe ſuffered him to depart, ſhe exclaimed, "O! let me not be miſtaken—It is the remembrance of a generous and diſintereſted heart—it is the unexpected ſight of its bounty, its pity, and its goodneſs: it is a combination in which are thoſe ſacred perſons who are above and under the earth; and no object, no image, leſs hallowed than theſe has overwhelmed your Caroline."

The Lieutenant embraced her, and being now in an anti-chamber that joined her father's room, he ſaid he would prepare Sir Guiſe to receive her.

She did not, however, remain long after him. He who calms the raging of the ſea, can raiſe the innocent flower which the ſtorm has beaten down. With him ſhe

communed;

communed; to him ſhe bent the knee, and offered up the prayer which was accepted.

She roſe tranquilized, and hearing herſelf called by a voice which, even when it ſummoned harſhly, ſhe had never diſobeyed; ſhe ſoon aſſiſted the pious offices of a reconciled ſon by blending with them thoſe of an exemplary daughter.

And now for ſome hours they had both the ineffable delight of teſtifying the bleſſed effects of a contrite ſpirit. The rock was ſoftened, and the tears which guſhed from thence, as from a pure ſource, were as living waters to cleanſe the polluted ſoul. Sir Guiſe avowed his crimes, owned his ſorrow, and his regret—confeſſed that he had erred beyond what the blameleſs minds of his children could image of wrong; but that now they were reſtored to him he had ſome aſſurance their innocent mediation would be accepted. Avowals like theſe he had made before, and with fraudulent deſign; but the reign of hypocriſy was paſt, and conſcience had at laſt aſcended her rightful throne.

## CHAPTER III.

### POISON AND ANTIDOTE.

CHEARED by theſe appearances, and anxious to improve them, the good brother and ſiſter ſat on each ſide of their father's bed, and tried every thing moſt likely to continue the happy ſymptoms. In anſwer to ſome kind queſtions Sir Guiſe had aſked, reſpecting the worthy old Denniſon, whom he conſidered as amongſt the firſt on the long liſt of thoſe he had injured, Caroline produced a letter with which the veteran ſteward had charged her at parting, and which ſhe promiſed to bring forward when it might moſt gratify the ſervant and the maſter. And this appeared to her the moment that it would ſet forth, in the ſimplicity of nature, the unaffected good wiſhes, and good will of an honeſt heart. Of this

Caroline, from a long knowledge of the writer, was perfectly aſſured—but fearing that, in the unfolding theſe, there might be ſome expreſſions which a mind, ſore from the wounds it had inflicted on itſelf, would feel too pointedly—ſhe propoſed to ſpare her father the trouble of peruſing it by conſigning it to her brother's reading, obſerving that he might, at ſome future early opportunity, either report the ſubſtance or give the whole. Jerom and Jonathan, who had been keeping watch over the Baronet, offered to withdraw; but Sir Guiſe, with ſome energy, ſaid—"as his improper behaviour to that much-wronged old man, and to every other perſon, had been publick, ſo ſhould be his confeſſions, his ſhame, and repentance." "I know," continued he, "my dear child's generous motive; but I muſt entreat to have the letter immediately, and will try to read it myſelf. For this purpoſe Sir Guiſe raiſed himſelf in the bed, and made many ineffectual efforts; but he had taken too wide a meaſure of his corporeal powers, or rather he

he had miſtaken a momentary ſupply of ſpirits, from ſeveral chearing circumſtances, for bodily ſtrength; and unable even to bear the poſture neceſſary to trace the characters of the letter, he was conſtrained to lie down, and intreat his ſon to read it; as his deſire to know the contents remained, and was perhaps, increaſed by the difficulty of procuring them. The Lieutenant having broken the ſeal, and unfolded the paper, began to read, but ſtopt in the middle of the firſt ſentence. In vain did his father importune him to proceed. Caroline gueſſing, indeed perceiving, in ſome meaſure, the cauſe, from what ſhe had already heard, now regretted ſhe had mentioned the letter till Sir Guiſe had gained a little more ſtrength. He agreed to this, and, feeling himſelf exhauſted, ſaid he wiſhed to be alone.

The Lieutenant and Caroline obeyed, and when they were gone Sir Guiſe made another ineffectual trial. "I ſee you are main willing, your honour, to hear what daddy Denniſon ſays," cried Jonathan, who

who had returned into the chamber with Jerom—"and I," exclaimed the latter, "will read it, were it as cramp and crooked as our own." "Aye we'll make him out, I warrant," anſwered Jerom; "an if it be long, why we can ride and tie you know, couſin. You a bit and I a bit."—Od's zookers, now you are got on the right ſide the poſt, your honour ſhan't be on the fidgets for the value of reading a letter; and ſo as the Squire and young Lady ſeem ſhilly-ſhally about it, what little book larning we have is at your ſervice, if you like to have it."

Taking the ſilence of the Baronet for conſent, though, in truth, he was ſilent becauſe he had not recovered himſelf enough to ſpeak, Jerom received the letter and began:

"TO SIR GUISE STUART, BARONET.

"By favour of his moſt excellent, and never enough to be loved daughter.

 "Honoured,

" Honoured, and, as I may now ſay by God's grace, honourable, Sir—bleſſed be God for it:

" We are told, your honour, that nothing has, for a great while, been new under the ſun, and that there has been an end put to miracles ever ſince the bible times—now that I take to be—to be—to be—"

What is that word Jonathan—he's as long as my leg.

" And a pretty deal more crooked," anſwered Jonathan, looking over his couſin's ſhoulder; " but I have him for all that—pokrifal, you fool, pokrifal, who's the beſt ſcholar now I wonder?"

Jerom, clapping him on the ſhoulder, ſaid, " You are a fine old Greecein to be ſure," and proceeded: " Now that I take to be pokrifal—for firſt it's new to ſee, your honour, what I hear, with great joy, you now are beginning to be, that the ſun, old as he is, mayhap ſhall hardly ſhine on the like again—and, ſecondly, ſo bad as you have

have been many long years, nothing but a marvellous miracle could make a good chriſtian man of you again—for 'tis eaſier for a leopard to change his ſpots—you underſtand me, your honour—ſo I dare ſay that, under God's favour, a miracle, and no ſmall one, has been made on purpoſe for your honour."

"Daddy Denniſon is a brave, ſenſical old youth, an't he coz?" ſaid Jonathan.

"Don't put me out," anſwered Jerom—"O, Sir, were the dear, good, real, Lady Stuart, whom you—you—"

"Better ſkip the next word, I fancy, coz," ſaid Jerom, heſitating—"ſee here, juſt where I have put my finger."

"It's the devil's own word to be ſure," ſaid Jonathan; "but the ſteward meant it ſhould be read, or he would not have put it down, beſides the thing's true, and ſo what ſignifies mincing of it?"

"Read on," ſaid Sir Guiſe; Jerom continued: "*Real* Lady Stuart, whom you MURDERED, as a body may ſay by inches,

 were

were ſhe alive to witneſs this good turn, ſhe would almoſt die again with joy: but for that matter ſhe does ſee it where ſhe now is; and my old heart bounds to think there is now a chance you may meet her: how muſt your honour alſo feel when you have got a little over the ſhame on't, to have your all-good ſon and daughter by your ſide to forgive you, and to make your bed in your ſickneſs, as the ſcripture ſaith. Your honour ſhould have old Denniſon about you too, but that I am rather dim ſighted of late, and moreover could no otherwiſe but by ſtaying behind to keep houſe, and nurſe my age, prevail on young maſter and miſtreſs to go in comfort. So I thought the only way to ſhew my love, at this great diſtance, would be to indite my thoughts in a letter that your honour might know I was not the leaſt glad to find you ſuch an altered man—and from being the greateſt—the greateſt—

"Here's another word," ſaid Jerom, checking himſelf, "which his honour may not like—looke."

"Lord,

"Lord, you are ſo ſqueamiſh—come I'll finiſh it," obſerved Jonathan, taking the letter and reading on—

—"And from being the greateſt ſinner, I think, I ever knew, are getting to be the greateſt penitent; and heaven can tell it ſhould be ſo, elſe the one can never be able to ſet off the other: I mention theſe things now out of pure kindneſs, that you may not imagine you have repented enough—for, alas! if your honour ſhould live to the age of Mathuſalem, and go in ſackcloth and aſhes all the time, it would not be too much, ſeeing what is paſt."

A groan here iſſued from the boſom of Sir Guiſe. Jonathan whiſpered to Jerom, "That the groan was a good omen: but that he was glad he had come almoſt to the end of the letter, becauſe," ſaid he, "you ſee the poor man's face is covered with tears, and 'tis a pity to whip a horſe to death when he ſees his fault, and, after all his freaks, is going the right road. Here's only a bit more to end with, your honour."

"And now honoured, and praifed be God, as I faid in the beginning,—honourable, old,—and as I may fay—new mafter, wifhing you may go on with the good work, fo that although your fins have been as fcarlet, they may become white as fnow, which, we are told in holy writ, fhall be the cafe to all true repenters,

I am, always,

Your old faithful fervant,

to command,

NESTOR DENNISON."

"But there's a poftfcript," oberved Jerom, "only a few lines though"—

"We have all, young and old, lived here, as I may fay, like people taken out of a peft-houfe, and put all at once into a paradife; but this, your honour will hear from better hands. All grace to your honour, and no more at prefent, but love to every thing at the old abbey, and to little old Fitz if alive;—I dare fay, if little Fitz knew how your honour had mended

mended yourſelf, he would come and 'tend you too. As to Squire Henry, and Madam Olivia, I ſhall ſay nothing,—but heaven make 'em happy.—Your honour has not a little to repent of in that quarter,—but I have done."

"And its time you had, old boy," ſaid Jonathan, folding up the letter and returning it to the Baronet, who had felt the truth of every paſſage at his heart, but made no other comment than that which was written in his ſighs and tears: both which much affected the young kinſmen, who uſed every means in their power to conſole him, though, in fact, ſome of thoſe intended conſolations, like Denniſon's epiſtle, probed, to a ſalutary end indeed, the deep-ſeated wound.

Meanwhile, Charles and Caroline had been trying to conſole one another: as it was a point pre-ſettled by the Colonel, that they were not to go beyond the walled-garden at the weſt-end of the houſe, for fear of being ſeen and known by any of the villagers:

villagers: they wandered without, perhaps, knowing their feet were in motion, over ſeveral parts of the houſe itſelf. In this ramble, they inſenſibly came to the room which Caroline had appropriated in happier hours, for its parallel ſituation to the caſtle. The inſtant, however, ſhe had ſet her foot into it ſhe drew back, as from ſudden recollection, and would have taken another path, but the Lieutenant arreſted her ſtep, by telling her that he ſaw from the window ſeveral perſons coming down the grand avenue.—"Good heaven!" exclaimed Caroline: "perhaps I mean, heaven forbid that—did you ſay ſeveral perſons, brother?"—

While ſhe aſked the queſtion, ſhe was mechanically moving forward in a direction which would have enabled her to anſwer it herſelf, for ſhe approached to the window, rapidly caught a view, not only of the walking porter but of ſeveral well known objects. "I fancy, my dear Charles," ſaid ſhe, trying to diſguiſe her ſenſations, "it muſt be ſome of the family, with perhaps

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our own Iſlanders."—"Yes," anſwered the Lieutenant, looking eagerly, "I think I can diſtinguiſh at this diſtance my mountain-daiſy, Johanna."—"Let us prepare to receive them," obſerved Caroline, repreſſing a ſigh, but taking her brother's hand, and leaving the chamber, which had alſo ſome pieces of its ancient furniture, and particularly a little cabinet which ſhe had not time to bring away before, but which ſhe now took under her arm.

When they had got back to her own apartment, one of the maids came up to inform her that True George was come laden with all manner of good things from the caſtle, and with a meſſage of love from his Lady, ſaying, that ſhe and her friends were coming to aſk permiſſion to partake of them. "They are not far off, Ma'am," added the maid; "I, and Letty, ſaw them ſome time ago. They left their carriage at the park gates."

The queſtion betwixt the brother and ſiſter now was, where to receive them. "I ſuppoſe it muſt be in one of the chambers,

 for

for none of the lower rooms I underſtand have any furniture."—"O yes, ſir," anſwered the maid, "the little ſaloon and parlour on the right hand are as nicely fitted up as ever, though not with any thing that was in them before."

New wonders ſeemed to take poſſeſſion of Charles and Caroline. They exchanged looks, neither ſpoke, but followed the maid down ſtairs into the ſaloon, where the Lieutenant recognized many of his old acquaintance of the caſtle in the articles that adorned it.

But before they had leiſure to form their feelings on the occaſion, into any thing but deſultory exclamations, the party, which conſiſted of Mrs. Fitzorton, Mrs. Herbert, Johanna, the Colonel, and little John, were announced as juſt entering the abbey. Each brought ſome teſtimony of loving-kindneſs. One a baſket of flowers, another of fruits. John Fitzorton had loaded his hands and pockets with food for the mind, while his nephew and ſiſter-in-law carried between them a ſmall wicker-pannier, which, the

moment after their entrance, was laid at the feet of Caroline Stuart. "I wiſh I could tell you the happineſs I have in rendering up my truſt," ſaid Olivia: "were my Henry here, he would do it for me,— he, who has an eloquence proper for every occaſion; but in his abſence, as none of theſe good people ſeem willing to help me out, I muſt e'en truſt to your known goodneſs, ſweet friend, and ſee whether the offering itſelf can ſupply my defects."

Olivia took the peg from the cover of the pannier, and the lid being laid open, uproſe to the view of the company, the now almoſt withered, but ſtill ſilky head, of Caroline's favoured ſpaniel, poor old Fitz: his eyes, like Denniſon's, were dim; his deep brown and once redundant ears, the hair of which was wont to curl like a cupid's head, hung languidly down, and, although he had ſhared every delicacy with Henry and Olivia, the waſting power of time had made his face look meagre, while the other parts of his body, even amidſt every ſign of care and love, bore the marks

of decay. He was ſtill, however, ſleek: to his protectors he had been intereſting, and the tokens of a good old age were in his countenance. He was received by his long abſent miſtreſs with all the cordiality that attached to him: indeed, ſo many were the ſenſations, that the unexpected ſight of him brought into her mind's eye, that her corporeal one could not hold its tears, while the cauſe of them himſelf, after being lifted from his downy bed in the pannier, and often paſſing his face over the lovely hand that careſſed him, began to ſhew ſigns of grateful recognition.

"I aſſure you, my dear Caroline, if it had been poſſible," cried Mrs. Fitzorton, "I would have reſtored him to you in all the beauty that graced him at your departure; and had you ſeen how anxious Henry has been to keep him from ſuffering, even by the power of time—alas! the ſpoiler of us all!—you would have loved him for it. And the dog loved him for it too—for I am in favour only when my huſband is abſent. Yes, Fitz," continued Olivia, "you know

know when your maſter is at home, I am but a kind of ſecond-beſt with you.—He, who, as one of his favourite bards expreſſes it, was 'made to engage all hearts' is your firſt love; ſo he is mine, and yet though you have been my rival, I forgive you."

While Olivia thus talked to, and fondled little Fitz, Johanna and Charles had got into a little *tête-à-tete* in another part of the ſaloon— as had the Colonel and Mrs. Herbert. With reſpect to Caroline, although nothing could be more apparently trivial than what had dropped from Mrs Fitzorton, on the topic of the four-footed favourite—an old, decrepid little animal—ſhe felt it of the utmoſt importance, and had never known an event in her life that required more management to prevent its being noticed, that ſhe paid the circumſtance a diſproportionate attention.

Little John, with that acute remark which belongs to children, aſked his mother, "if the Lady was not taken very ill; and I am ſure, ſaid he, 'tis a pity ſuch pretty eyes ſhould ever weep—yet any body

body may fee, there are tears in them now. —Except yourfelf, mamma, I think I never faw fo handfome a lady—and I dare fay, papa would think fo too. I'll write to him about her."

Caroline over-heard part of this; fome of it caught the ear of John Fitzorton, who walked reftlefs about the room; then defiring Johanna to join Olivia, he faid to Charles, in a governed voice, "Lieutenant, I fear your fifter is ftill unhappy! You fhould have told me this." "I knew it not myfelf," anfwered Charles.

"It muft appear ftrange," cried Caroline, as if confcious fhe had excited converfation, "that I fhould have beftowed on this little brute fo much more than is his due, while I am in the prefence of fo many perfons who have higher claims to my grateful attention; but the truth is, I am every way fo furrounded by thofe invaluable claimants, and feel fo powerfully the impayable debt I owe them, that I fhrink under the confcious weight of unnumbered obligations,

obligations, and deplore the inſignificancy of my powers to expreſs my feelings."

"Expreſs them only, ſweet Caroline," ſaid Olivia, "in being happy—in thinking that you are part of ourſelves—in believing that Providence has at length heard our mutual prayers—your's in rendering a parent worthy of your love; ours in bringing you, after many a fruitleſs wiſh, within reach of friends ſo very precious to us. I cannot be ſurpriſed at your preſent emotions: I know full well they muſt partake equally of pain and pleaſure; but the former, I truſt, will hourly decreaſe, and the latter receive ſome large additions."

The air of ſoothing, and the accents of encouragement, with which the admirable Olivia ſpoke this, the generoſity of its motive, and the ſoft blandiſhments which illuſtrated, by tender action, every heart-felt word, wrought powerfully on the grateful Caroline, who ſuffered herſelf to be heard: and on Olivia's expreſſing a hope that ſhe found Sir Guiſe better, and the abbey a little more like its former ſelf than fame

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had rumoured it, Caroline ſaid, ſmilingly, "that ſhe ſhould have thought it all the work of ſome good Genii, had ſhe not long known that a race of beings, ſuperior in benevolence to every fabled creation, reſided in Fitzorton caſtle, and diſperſed their bleſſings to all around—and to ſuch magicians ſhe attributed the enchantments which awaited her own, and her brother's return to the abbey.

Thus by a happy and innocent compliment to the family in general, did Caroline throw a timely veil over the particular cauſe of her late perplexity.

John Fitzorton, however, ſtill appeared anxious, and traverſed from one party to another without fixing near any body long enough to begin diſcourſe. His diſquietude was ſilently noticed by Olivia, who, imputing it all to tender emotions in the preſence of his beloved Caroline, ſtole towards him with an "aſſurance, that all theſe inevitable aſperities would in time ſoften, and that though ſhe would not betray his ſecret for the world, ſhe could not but think many things

things which had dropped from Caroline, admitted an interpretation in his favour.— Thefe fhe promifed to impart when fhe got home; and as Sir Guife was now reftored to virtue, fhe hoped her dear John would not fhut up his mind againft any kind impreffions."

While John was confidering whether it would be beft to let Olivia continue this miftake, or to correct it in part, Mrs. Herbert came foward to fay, that Caroline had been fuggefting the impoffibility of quitting her father fo foon, and had intreated her to intercede with the Colonel for her and her party remaining fome time longer. "O, by all means!" interpofed Olivia, "grant her filial wifhes, fend away the carriages at once, and let us all affift in the recovery of the now good parent, and the confequent felicity of his children!"

Johanna and the Lieutenant again got together. "Ah! my Charles," exclaimed the former, not in jealous, but in confcioufly humble accents, "would I had never feen

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the lovely Olivia! your affection for me, you have often ſaid, was grounded on a fancied reſemblance of her, and if ſo, O how muſt the poor ineffectual copy fade in your eye in a compariſon of the original, which, ſurely, is grace and lovelineſs itſelf!—I have ſhrunk, even in my own idea, ever ſince I firſt ſaw her in this meridian ſplendour of her charms. Even in her infancy ſhe was faſcinating; but how little was I prepared for the attractions which now ſurround her.—'Tis true, ſhe is the wife of your friend, and you hold her ſacred and appropriate—but if you love me only for my ſimilitude to thoſe features, my hopes to retain your heart muſt be faint even as that ſimilitude; yet were the ſight of her to rob me of your heart, could I forbear to love the author of my deſpair, when I ſee her thus arrayed in every grace—in every virtue?" Charles could only reply to this by an ardent glance, and gentle preſſure of the hand; for Arthur, Floreſco, and the apothecary came into the room, with a ſummons from Sir Guiſe Stuart,

Stuart, who underſtanding there were ſome of the caſtle family below, ſaid he ſhould think himſelf honoured if any of them would deign to attend his ſon and daughter into his chamber, that he might pour before them his true thanks for their unbounded goodneſs to him and his. Burton ſaid he believed the viſit would act upon the ſpirits of his patient, as a richer cordial than any he could preſcribe for him. Arthur inſiſted it would be an act of ſpiritual charity. Caroline pleaded eloquently without uttering a word. Olivia took the hand of the latter, and ſaid, ſhe would anſwer for the aſſent of Johanna and Mrs. Herbert, to every thing Arthur had pronounced charitable: "John, I am ſure," added ſhe, "cannot refuſe to promote his own good work." "No," ſaid his nephew, "though my uncle is a philoſopher, he can juſt laugh and cry like a little brat as I am; I have made him often do both myſelf—ſo has ſiſter Carry."

Beſides wiſhing to do every good he attempted, effectually, John deſired to ſee how

how the long-implored, and, at length, granted requeſt of Sir Guiſe to ſee his children, had operated; "if the Lieutenant leads," ſaid he, "the Colonel ſhall follow, although contrary to military etiquette."

"I thought," obſerved Olivia, "that in all the little matters of this great world, we women were the commanding officers; and that wherever the ladies led, not only captains and colonels, but all their armies were proud to follow; however, as we depute Lieutenant Charles and Colonel John our aid-de-camps on the occaſion, we order them to go forward."

"If poet papa had been here," cried little John, "I know what he would have called them." "What!" queſtioned the Colonel: "Not aid-de-camps, but gentlemen of the bedchamber, uncle; and if I can get to the room firſt, I ſhall be the page in waiting you know."

Little John, bribing the apothecary to accompany him, ran out of the ſaloon, and if there had before been any difficulty, his

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apt and playful allufion would have fettled it: the feelings of the party which had been fomewhat entangled in a labyrinth, by the preceding converfation, now concentrated in one generous point, and they were conducted by Charles to his father's chamber.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE CHAMBER OF A PENETENT.

NEITHER little John, however, nor his friend the apothecary, though both nimble-footed beings, were the firft perfons of the groupe who reached the aforefaid apartment. Arthur's Florefco no fooner underftood, from a whifper of his mafter, that it was the intention of the party to indulge the Baronet in his defire, than he flipped imperceptibly out of the faloon, while the company were fettling the order of their going: he luckily met True George, to whom

whom he imparted the news, and both flew with it to Sir Guiſe, who no ſooner heard the tidings, than he begged George would aſſiſt him in ſome little preparations for their reception. Exerting, therefore, all his force, and aſſiſted not only by George and Floreſco, but the egregious letter readers, Jonathan and Jerom—the good apothecary, and his young companion, found the valetudinarian faint, from the labours of equipment, or rather of ſupporting the fatigue of being equipped, but arrayed in one of the comfortable changes of an invalid's wardrobe, which the diligent and pious love of Caroline had purchaſed on her way, in addition to what had been ſupplied by the conſiderate friendſhip of Colonel Fitzorton and Olivia.

The party on entering were pleaſingly ſurpriſed to obſerve Sir Guiſe Stuart able to receive them in that manner. He teſtified the fulleſt ſenſe of obligation to all in general, but repeatedly called the Colonel the reſtorer of his children and himſelf. Some —he obſerved, looking firſt at Olivia, then at

at George, were abſent—whom he dared not expect to ſee, but for whom he had poured his daily, hourly prayers.

"He means my beloved Henry, and dear Jane Atwood," whiſpered Olivia to Caroline.

"Yet if all now preſent will chear my throbbing heart with the ſounds of forgiveneſs, undeſerved as I feel it is, I may ſtill hope that the pardon of the abſent, great as have been my offences to them, may in time be added unto me."

He next inſiſted upon kneeling, under the ſupport of his children, to receive the forgiveneſs of the company, and when he was led to True George, that humble creature, unable to ſee his ſuperior in ſtation in any poſture that implied condeſcenſion, without meeting him on equal terms, bent his knee to the Baronet at the ſame time, and aſſured him in a generous whiſper, "that it ſhould not be long before his forgiveneſs was ſealed by both the certain perſons he had alluded to; meanwhile he begged

begged him to believe that he could anſwer for it, neither the one nor the other bore him any malice."

Floreſco had thrown himſelf into a ſupplicating poſition, in a quiet corner, almoſt folded in the bed curtains.

The good Burton was very deſirous to ſhorten this ſcene, which, he obſerved, was becoming much too ſtrong for his patient; but the moſt trying part which the latter had allotted to himſelf was yet to be performed. "Grant me, I pray you," ſaid the almoſt exhauſted man, "the indulgence of another moment,—while in the preſence of thoſe I have wronged, I now publickly ſolicit what has already been privately granted to me, the forgiveneſs of the two beings I have the moſt injured. O pardon, pardon my children, the author of your lives, as of all the tyrannies, torments, and frauds which have rendered thoſe lives intolerable. Pardon him who has deprived you of health, peace, fortune, and, ſeverer than all, of a parent worthy of your loves, good, virtuous, and ſincere. Pardon him whom

you ought to execrate, pray for him whom you ought to deſpiſe, deſert, and curſe, in return, O God in juſt return, for the curſes he has poured on you!"

Sir Guiſe had ſunk from the arms of his children on his knees, and folded his trembling hands, and lifted up his ſtreaming eyes. Finding it in vain to attempt checking the effuſion of his ſurcharged heart, his ſon and daughter knelt with him, and by every tender evidence their own ſituation allowed, ſtrove to convince him he had atoned for every thing. Charles importuned him for pardon on his own impetuous, and perhaps unfilial errors, inſtead of imitating his meek and uncomplaining ſiſter. Caroline, wholly regardleſs of ſo many obſervers, was only intent to raiſe her father from his humiliating poſture; and this being effected by means of the Colonel and True George, Jerom and Jonathan having left the room, he was no ſooner replaced on the bed, than Caroline entreated the company would leave him

to compoſure, in the care of herſelf and Charles. She then concealed her father from obſervation, by drawing the curtains round him, knelt by his ſide, and while ſhe uſed every ſoothing power of her tender heart, conjured him to believe that he had not only conciliated the reſpect of all who had heard, all who had ſeen his diſtreſs, and poſſeſſed her own and her brother's tendereſt love; but that he might be convinced the angel ſpirit of his wife, and the ſpirit of God himſelf would be his propitiated guardians.

Father Arthur confirmed this in the name of the Almighty.

With great difficulty John got his ſympathizing friends out of the chamber: Every one offering to be the nurſe of the father and aſſociate of the child. Burton, however, ſuggeſting that the very life of Sir Guiſe, who, he ſaid, was in a much more perilous ſtate than they imagined, depended on their obſerving the wiſe and delicate requeſt of his daughter, they went down

ftairs. The company waited in the faloon till the apothecary had again vifited his patient, and as he perceived the only reftoratives to be hoped were reft and quiet, he had intereft enough with the party to perfuade them to return home, which they did, after one of Caroline's women, following the orders of Olivia, had foftly taken up little Fitz into Caroline's own chamber.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE TREASURE RESTORED.

IN this exhaufted ftate however, the lulling powers of the apothecary's prefcription, and of flumber, gradually reftored Sir Guife, of whofe comparative recovery a meffage was taken by the worthy Burton himfelf to the caftle, after his evening vifit to the abbey; but the Baronet's fituation was pronounced, in anfwer to John's ftill

earneſt enquiries, too precarious either for his removal to any other place, or for withdrawing the conſolation of his children.

It was, therefore, neceſſary for John to ſend away the carriages, and that the drivers might not commit any blunders by unneceſſary goſſipings on the road, it was determined that, as True George might be wanted at home, Jerome and Jonathan ſhould, on pretence of having buſineſs that way, ſee them ſafe back to town: for, although when Irwin recommended them, he ſaid they were to be truſted—the Colonel had frequently expreſſed regret on the journey, when it was too late to make new arrangements, that he had not thought of Jerom and Jonathan, and even Irwin himſelf, rather than confide in any perſon more immediately out of the family; but, alas! ſuch is the imperfection of human foreſight even in the moſt ſagacious minds. The plan, however, of diſmiſſing the chaiſe appearing the firſt beſt meaſure to be taken the two truſty couſins ſportingly told their ſweethearts at Little Brixham, they were

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going to London to buy them gingerbread husbands, and receiving due inſtructions from the Colonel, began their journey in the duſk of that very evening.

But this meaſure went to the removal of only one, and that an inconſiderable perplexity, in the project with which John Fitzorton had embarraſſed himſelf. Prompted, in the firſt inſtance, by the exhilarating thought of encouraging penitence, of obtaining a victory over that hate, of which he now thought the remains ought not to harbour in his boſom againſt a puniſhed foe, who ſought his mercy; anxious to mitigate the dire pangs of two worthy children, who were hiding their heads from an iniquitous parent; and flattering himſelf that the gratification he wiſhed to gain for both parties, might be carried on, and completed without any counteraction of events, he forgot to provide againſt many points of which his heart, though uſually provident, had not ſuffered him to ſuſpect the danger. Henry himſelf could not have

 pre-

precipitated a benevolence with a more fervid but perilous rapidity.

The time of Mrs. Fitzorton's confinement, from the profpect of a third child, drew near; the return of her hufband could not in affection, or in propriety, be long protracted; Olivia grew daily more and more fond of Caroline's fociety, and he himfelf became fhocked at the idea that he might have led the latter into an inevitable relapfe of fenfibility, on the fharp point of which, though her principles would remain unfhaken, her heart might receive an involuntary wound. He knew from himfelf the poffibility of uniting the weaknefs of fenfation with the ftrength of practical virtue: and he felt by experience alfo, that as a foldier and a man, *retreat* was often the only meafure of fecurity: and as to the doctrine of annihilating the paffions of the foul, while their fovereign objects were brought clofe under the eye, he allowed the duty of inculcating it, and felt the neceffity of the fentiment, of daily praying not to be led into temptation:

for

for though every impure thought will be expelled, even if, for a moment, it ſhould dare to approach the truly virtuous mind, the thought may be pure, while the heart, the very ſource of that purity,

> "May bleed and agonize at every pore."

He was not altogether at eaſe with reſpect to the ſtate of the lieutenant's affections; his own had long been under the deſpotiſm of his determined ſway: he continued a tyrant on himſelf, and wrenched the ſceptre from each unruly paſſion as it made head againſt him. But he ſoon ſaw that the ill-ſmothered affections of Henry, the half-reſtored peace of Caroline, and the hitherto well-managed happineſs of Olivia, were all again at hazard, and made ſo even by a project of his own.

Reflections of this kind began to haraſs him as he returned with his party to the Bacaſtle, after the intereſting ſcene in the Baronet's chamber.

Every ſucceeding day increaſed the apprehenſion, and there was not one with

whom he could ſhare the confidence, ſave the Lieutenant, who, except in his own caſe, ſaw clearly the danger, but no immediate way of removing it: as his father alternately recovered and relapſed, and though his life would not probably be long, he felt it a kind of parricide to ſhorten it by leaving him.

Olivia alſo began to be importunate on the ſubject of Henry. She allowed every merit to John's original motive, but ſaid, that matters at the abbey had taken upon the whole ſo happy a turn, that ſhe thought it would do her huſband rather good than harm to make him partaker of the general felicity. She ſubmitted to John whether there was not ſomething cruel in thus ſhutting him out of his ſhare of joy in the return of Henry's friend? As John did not well know how to get rid of theſe reaſonings, he remained ſilent, which being taken for a ſpecies of aſſent, ſhe followed up her ſuppoſed advantages, ſometimes by the aid of Mrs. Herbert and Johanna, and ſometimes Olivia would call in Caroline herſelf as an auxiliary;

auxiliary; and ſhe attributed the embarraſſment which ſhe diſcovered in that young lady to an unwillingneſs to oppoſe any meaſure in which John Fitzorton did not ſeem heartily to concur.

And as if theſe entanglements wanted yet another twiſt, Olivia hinted to John her perfect aſſurance that he would find in her huſband the warmeſt friend his paſſion for Caroline could wiſh, and that even upon that account his preſence was deſirable. Although, ſaid ſhe, the uncertain ſtate of Sir Guiſe's health, would make it indelicate and unſeaſonable to point to ſubjects of that kind, I have omitted no occaſion ſince her arrival to do juſtice to your merits, of which, indeed, I find her impreſſed in a manner the moſt favourable.

This opinion was now ſo fixed in Mrs. Fitzorton's imagination, that at every opportunity ſhe ſpoke of her brother John's various excellencies—"and although," ſaid ſhe, "that beloved being, who, I hope, will ſhortly be amongſt us, yields to none the palm either of genius or goodneſs, and

ſeems every hour to gain new attractions, by a certain peculiar tenderneſs that attaches to all he ſays or does—pardon me, for paying him in abſence this paſſing tribute which riſes from my full heart,—I know not any head, or any heart, but thoſe of Henry, which can vie with John Fitzorton's."

Glad of a ſubject which might give a relieving turn to that which Olivia had excited, Caroline faſtened with an eager haſte on the merits of a man who luckily ſupplied her with abundant ſources of eulogy. Finding that Mrs Fitzorton only knew, partially, the hiſtory of the Colonel's protective goodneſs to herſelf and friends, ſhe gave the particulars of this patronage in the moſt generous and glowing colours. Warmed by the honeſt theme, ſhe roſe above all ſelfiſh emotions, and drew the character of that exalted man, till ſhe affected her fair auditor even to tears; and although Olivia conceived ſomewhat leſs of John's conduct, as to its diſintereſtedneſs, even than it deſerved, thinking the grand agent therein to be love,

and allowed lefs merit alfo to Caroline's encomiums, which inftead of confining to gratitude, fhe imputed to love alfo; fhe faw clearly her brother's manly hand, and beneficent heart, in various characteriftick difplays. When Caroline's incenfe was paid, Olivia felt herfelf called upon by the voice of equity, and of love likewife, to mention the part which her Henry had taken in the affairs of Caroline and Charles. —" How often we have traced your paths, paufed in your fhades, praifed your virtues, wept at your misfortunes—your's, and the Lieutenant's!—abroad and at home, you have mingled in our hopes, our fears—and although, from a generous apprehenfion that my Henry, whofe health and fpirits are of late uncertain, might feel too powerfully from the fudden fight of friends fo long defpaired of, the excellent John has projected a temporary abfence; doubt not, but when we have prepared him for the joy of fuch a meeting, Caroline, that his happinefs will be fupreme. Meanwhile, though I acknowledge that our brother has entitled

himſelf, by more important ſervices, to the firſt place, as Eſau appropriated the birth-right, my Henry has a claim to the ſecond: nor muſt I forget to inform you, that a little ſtranger, who is now with her father, our firſt-born, is honoured by bearing your name, and I hope ſoon to preſent her."

John Fitzorton joined them abruptly, juſt as Olivia finiſhed, and thinking it the moment in which he would appear in luſtre before Caroline, would have left them together, but that the Colonel expreſſed a haſty and eager deſire to confer with Olivia on ſome diſpatches he had received from Partington. She therefore took an affectionate leave of Caroline, and attended John home.

On the return of our amiable Caroline into the abbey,—for the preceding interview had taken place in the flower garden; —ſhe was accoſted by the good Arthur, who was juſt deſcending from the oriſons he had been offering up in the Baronet's apartment. The report he made of that unfortunate man's mind was no leſs favour-

able

able than what the apothecary had been able to fend her of his body. "He has had another comfortable repofe," faid he, "and his piety is uniform even when his health is irregular. And I have received a welcome prefent this morning, my dear child, upon which I am fure you will congratulate me—obferve," continued he, taking a fmall parcel from his pocket—"folded in this careful envelope, and wrapt literally up in cotton—obferve, my child, the keys of my chapel-houfe, chapel, and the hallowed fanctuary to which it leads: on the outfide of my parcel you fee is written, in fair and legible characters, words that defcribe at once—benevolence and truth. 'Sacred depofits.' "The hand," exclaimed Caroline, "is"—"No matter whofe the hand," faid father Arthur,—"the heart that governed it was bountiful, noble—and reftores to me more than recovered empires. Dear and holy fcenes! I will offer the tribute of my thanks to the generous beings who have faved you from prophanation, and although, haply, I may find in you the

marks

marks of a defolated, long abfent friend, thy altered ftate fhall but the more endear thee to Arthur."

"And to Caroline," fighed fhe.

"And poor Florefco fhall make thee all as him was ufed," cried the little Indian, who bounded at the thought of once more feeing the fcenes of his early care; and as Arthur delivered to him the keys, he preffed them to his lips, to give them welcomes.

The Colonel, who had received them from Olivia, prefented them to Arthur, only intreating that if they were made ufe of, it might be late in an evening, to avoid that difcovery which he now found fo difficult, yet fo neceffary to be prevented. Caroline's fecret thoughts, however, had gone to the moft holy places to which thefe keys appertained, almoft immediately on her arrival; and though fhe did not know how to give thofe thoughts a voice, from the fear of feeming to prefs on the Colonel's exhortation to keep within the bounds of the immured flower-garden, and abbey, fhe hailed

ed the profpect of having her folicitude on this fubject granted without importunity. Her wifhes being now made known to the good Arthur, he readily gave his promife to be her conductor on the very firft evening fhe could be fpared with fatisfaction to herfelf from her attendance on Sir Guife.

Arthur himfelf, however, refolved to dedicate the coming night to his ancient abode. "It will be beft that I and my little white-hearted black man fhould go firft, and make our little preparations." Florefco embraced, as ufual, his mafter's robes, at finding himfelf included in the vifit to the fpot where he had received the firft precepts of chriftianity, and the firft pure idea of a God.

## CHAPTER VI.

### MYSTERIOUS APPEARANCE.

MEANTIME the trials of Caroline accumulated from every quarter. They frequently pursued her into her father's chamber, where, as she watched the too languid or too fervid pulse, or held the now parched, and now humid hand of Sir Guise, he would frequently lament, amongst the other causes of his regret, the disingenuous part he had acted, in regard to herself and Henry Fitzorton; in reply to all which, though she felt the truth of every word, like a poisoned arrow, whose barb had been left to rankle in her heart, she would unmurmuringly "beg him to be comforted on every part of that subject, as the person he mentioned, not only constituted the happiness of one of the most amiable of human kind, but was, she trusted, supremely happy himself; and when a more particular

particular review of these afflictive circumstances made it impossible for her to answer, she would pour the balms of silent forgiveness on her self-execrating parent, by assuring him, that she considered Mrs. Fitzorton's goodness, manifested both at the castle and the abbey, as deserving every blessing heaven could bestow, and that she loved, revered, and honoured her, beyond any woman then living :" in which assurance she exceeded not the truth.

On returning to her father's apartment, from her conversation with Arthur, she had the heart-felt comfort of finding him so much mended as to converse on several topicks he had never before agitated. He required from his attendant children, the history of their wanderings; and as Caroline imagined the knowledge of John Fitzorton's guardianship of herself and party, would tend to establish a reconciling sentiment, she repeated to her father what she had told to Olivia. It is not possible to paint the mingled emotions of admiration and respect Sir Guise now felt for the Colonel,

Colonel, or the ſenſe of ſhame and ſelf-abaſement for himſelf. At a more compoſed moment, however, of the ſame day, he eaſed his now ſinking and now overflowing heart, by entering into a detail of the conduct of Olivia and True George towards him, as it had been reported in different converſations by the apothecary.

The brother and ſiſter now heard all that part of the benevolent ſtory which appertained to Olivia, and which ſhe had omitted in her own narration; freſh cauſes of admiration and of gratitude to both Olivia and George were hence diſcovered; and it was made manifeſt what mighty bleſſings theſe two excellent beings, under the conduct of John Fitzorton, had beſtowed. The good Burton's own benignity was next the ſubject of the Baronet's eulogy: the voluntary attendance of Jonathan and Jerom had their due ſhare of his praiſe—and, in fine, from this evening's diſcourſe, in addition to what ſhe had before gathered from Olivia, a complete hiſtory of the tranſactions of the abbey and the caſtle, from the time

time of her departure even unto that moment, was in Caroline's poſſeſſion.

Her whole ſoul was filled with wonder, and with praiſe; and combining the bounty and protection which ſhe and her deareſt friends had received from the ſame ſources, ſhe roſe in pious thought, and as her meditation aſcended from finite to infinite, her ſpirit communed with that power who, out of darkneſs and anarchy, natural and moral, can educe light, and bring forth order.— "Ah, aſſure yourſelf, my deareſt brother, and my honoured father," exclaimed ſhe, "while all of *us* have thus been in the care of heaven's beſt creatures, *they* have been wrought on in our favour by heaven itſelf! all of us were in need of divine aſſiſtance, and the manner in which the effects have been brought about cannot leave us a doubt of the cauſe."

"Bleſſed be his holy name," ejaculated Sir Guiſe.

Soon after this, the Baronet confeſſed he felt much relieved by having paid the debt he thought due to the patrons of his re-

pentance: and although the length and interruptions of his narrative had wearied his body, his ſpirits were lighter, and his mind more refreſhed than it had been for ſome time.

In this tranquil period father Arthur came into the apartment, and entered on the veſper duties of his office; theſe being ended, the Baronet declared his wiſh to devote the reſt of the night to that repoſe which he augured he ſhould beſt enjoy, if his ſlumbers were unbroken by the idea that his too diligent children were loſing their own neceſſary reſtoratives: and this being a point inſiſted on by the apothecary, who had come in with Arthur, Sir Guiſewas left in the care of a ſingle attendant, and the reſt of the party retired.

They retired, but not to ſleep. Too many aweful images impreſſed the boſoms of the brother and ſiſter to permit them to indulge even the thoughts of repoſe. Father Arthur too, and his Indian, were wakeful: the former told Caroline, that a ſudden meſſage brought by True George from

from the Colonel, who requested to have back the keys, put a stop to his intended visit to the chapel-house; but that Mr. Burton had now brought word from the castle, "if any of the party felt it material for the quiet of their minds to resort thither, and had no objection to the present evening, he and George would be their conductors, and guide them by a *secret way*."

It is scarcely possible to express the eagerness with which the whole party caught at this proposition. Caroline enquired earnestly after the secret way which Burton had intimated; and when the subterraneous passage which led from the uninhabited part of the abbey, and which had been in ancient days the ordinary path from thence to the chapel-house, and which all had frequently heard of, they seemed much to wonder it had not occurred in relief of their late embarrassment: forgetting their minds had been engrossed by a multiplicity of absorbing objects which kept every power in action. True George observed to them that

that his maſter, Henry, had often paſſed more time than he ſhould mention in ſome of the receſſes of that very paſſage, and, to his knowledge, gone at midnight all alone, as he thought, by that path to the abbey.

A univerſal wiſh to profit of the preſent opportunity poſſeſſed every one; and "O let us not loſe a moment!" breathed in a deciding whiſper from Caroline to the reſt. George placed a freſh candle in the lantern with which he had been conducting Burton. Lead, ſaid the Lieutenant. George was in motion: Floreſco took the robe of Arthur and followed: Caroline was conducted by her brother and the apothecary. The night was dark, but they paſſed along the ruins without any impediment, and gained the trap-door, which ſhut from obſervation the ſteps that led by a very deep deſcent into the ſubterraneous way. George now begged the company to pauſe until he lighted a torch, which he ſaid he had left a ſtep or two farther on. They ſtopt, but what was their ſurpriſe when he returned to them ſaying, that "the torch had

had been taken from the place where he had put it." "It muſt have fallen down," ſaid Caroline, "but the lantern will do, my good friend, perfectly well." They went forward ſlowly; the maſſes of ſtone, mortar, and fragments, that had fallen in the path, in many parts, made it very difficult to paſs; and the light which was afforded by the taper in the lantern but dimly ſhewed the obſtructions. Cautiouſly, however, purſuing the path, which, though not in the ſtraight line, was ſufficiently broad in general, they came to a ſtone ſeat, projecting from the wall, where Arthur, propoſed they ſhould reſt a moment. He prevailed on Caroline to ſit down.

"Ah! my dear good young lady, if you knew how often a certain perſon had been on that very ſeat," ſighed George! "Pray, let us go forward," ſaid Caroline, riſing, "I am perfectly able to proceed."—As they came to a curve in the paſſage a little farther on, and which George, holding the lantern, had gained firſt, he exclaimed,—

"Good

"Good heavens! look, look, there's my torch, as ſure as I am alive." Nothing of this, however, appearing to the company, as in the next inſtant they turned the angle, it was attributed to fear, or rather fancy; for George had nothing of the former in his nature. Preſently they came within ſight of another receſs, as they approached which, a dark ſhadow, reſembling a human figure, palpably aroſe from the ſeat in view of the whole company, and ran with great ſpeed along the paſſage. On referring to one another it was admitted, that every one had ſeen it at the ſame moment, and in the ſame point of view; but without making any reflection, they preſſed onward, and with very little interruption arrived at a large circular opening, within a few paces of the correſpondent trap-door.—"There is the torch again," cried George;—"look, it is now going away through one of the gaps in the wall!"

It was, indeed, viſible to all for ſome moments, and then diſappeared

"It is very ſtrange," ſaid Arthur; "yet

it

it cannot be an illuſion to us all: neither can it, if not imaginary, be of ill augury to beings ſeeking a place of peace and holineſs—ſo let us go fearleſs on."

"Perhaps," obſerved Burton, "it may be the evil ſpirit that once haunted the poor gentleman in the abbey, and is now wandering about this dark diſmal ſpot under ground without any body to ſpeak to it, or keep it company, becauſe of its wickedneſs."

"As ſure as can be that is it," aſſerted True George, "and it may go on walking and wailing that way theſe thouſand years; but as his reverence ſays, if it be the devil himſelf, it can have nothing to ſay to us—ſo here we go again." "I rather apprehend it to be," obſerved Burton, "if it really be not a deception of our ſenſes, ſome of the ——" as the apothecary was proceeding in his conjecture——

"Hark! huſh!" cried the Lieutenant, "I certainly heard ſome body ſpeak."

They broke ſhort their ſteps, but all was ſtill; they walked forward to the trap-door,

when a ſecond noiſe of voices, not their own, induced them to liſten, and the word "murder" diſtinctly iſſued from one of the corners of the circular opening.

"In the name of God," demanded Arthur, advancing,—"what is your purpoſe?"

By this time George had gained the trap, and opened the door that led to the ſecret ſteps that conducted to the edge of the foreſt, near which ſtood the chapel-houſe. And juſt as Caroline was preparing to aſcend the ſteps, while George held the lantern to clear her path, the figure which had been ſeen ſoon after they entered the paſſage, now more decidedly human, accompanied by two others, flitted along, and though every one followed and attempted to ſtop them, they gained the top, and were loſt in the foreſt almoſt inſtantly.

## CHAPTER VII.

### MORE MYSTERIES.

BUT these myſterious appearances were ſoon ſucceeded by magick of a different kind, for taking the wood-path, the little gothick gate that ſeparated the chapel-houſe front garden from the foreſt, preſented the object of their midnight ramble. The monk, preceding the action by a ſpontaneous effuſion of his truly pious ſoul, approached the door of his beloved manſion; and after aſſuring his friends that whatever unhallowed things might be permitted to hover without its walls, he was certain all within was pure, and holy.

The door opened while he was yet ſpeaking as if by an inviſible hand; for on entering, after a ſhort pauſe, no one appeared; but in the next inſtant freſh ſcenes of wonder roſe before them. In

the firſt compartment of the chapel-houſe the ſacred lamp was lighted that hung over the *beneticre*. The crucifixes in the *ſcriptorum*, and in every other part, bore ſhining marks of conſtant and even of reverential care. The dormitory could ſtill boaſt its wholeſome couch for the Franciſcan, and the attendant pallet by its ſide was invitingly ſpread for the faithful Floreſco—but how ſhall we duly deſcribe what preſented itſelf to our aſtoniſhed gueſts in the *refectoire?* how repreſent their ſenſations on beholding the table covered modeſtly, yet abundantly, with every fruit and flowret of the ſeaſon? and while their admiring eyes were fixed on theſe, a ſweet and ſolemn breathing ſound as of aërial muſic, accompanied by a voice of ſofteſt melody, invited their attention. All ſeemed enchantment! and the ſacred ſpell was yet ſtronger when they found both the words and the air were deſigned to gratulate the long-abſent father of the chapel-houſe and his friends to their modeſt reſting-place. As they ſtood, even at the door of the *refectoire*, liſtening,

liſtening, and obſerving on theſe, forth iſſued, from a ſmall receſs at the bottom of the room, the enchanters themſelves—Olivia Fitzorton and Jane Atwood.

The ſurprize and effect of this encounter upon the whole company, at ſuch a time, and in ſuch a place, was extremely affecting. Divine and human ſentiments ſeemed to mix. "Do not imagine," exclaimed Olivia, advancing, "that you are under any conjuration. Every thing you ſee and hear has fallen out quite in the common way. I expected that the return of the keys, and the good apothecary's offer, would immediately bring you hither; we buſied ourſelves therefore in making our little preparations: when all was ready, we perſuaded the Colonel to conduct us, unknown even to Johanna and Mrs. Herbert, for the delight of a little ſtratagem of this kind is its myſtick ſecreſy; and here have we been ever ſince ſadly afraid that our commander in chief would return to eſcort us back before you came. Pray pardon the deception, and enjoy the reality."

 "Fair

"Fair and virtuous lady," ſaid Arthur, "had I not before had reaſon to believe that the veritable author of all good can inſpire ſome of his creatures to kinder actions than were ever painted by mere human fancy for the fabled Arcadia, I ſhould, perhaps, believe that I was tranſported into fairy land, and that you and this fair damſel were the benevolent Genii; but I had rather do homage to God's own creations than to the beſt and brighteſt of mere imagination. It is real excellence, real philanthropy, to which I now bow my knee, and before whom I now pour forth my heart." Every one followed the example, and reiterated the effuſion of the holy father.

But, in pure obedience to heaven-taught feelings, the ſable child of nature, not contented with ſimple kneeling, fell proſtrate at Olivia's feet, then preſſed the hem of her garment to his lips, kiſſed the ſacred earth near which ſhe ſtood, and, indeed, almoſt every well remembered object in the chapel-houſe, running rapidly from one to the

other.

other. Jane Atwood took the earlieſt opportunity to queſtion Caroline how ſhe had left her father, then joined the ſide of her True George, well ſatisfied with the information ſhe had received. Charles was wrapt in ſilent admiration. Arthur now paid his viſit of greeting to other objects dear to recollection—the ſtoried windows, ſacred figures, ſculptured effigies of the virgin and the redeemer, and found them all in the moſt perfect preſervation—the emotions of his innocent heart mounted to his eyes as he made this ſurvey. Floreſco accompanied him, and having indulged his firſt ungovernable emotions, followed the lead of his maſter in ſimilar ſilence, and with ſimilar feelings—the words: "Oh, bleſſed Saviour! oh, hallowed Maria! oh, Lord of earth and of heaven! make us worthy of theſe thy benignities," were reiterated at almoſt every ſtep.

Meantime, Olivia again ſtruck the harmonious chords, and, by an air yet more ſolemn, carried the ſoul ſtill nearer to the ſkies.—"Lady," obſerved Arthur, "the

words of both the ſtrains, with which you have honoured us, ſeem to me well meriting the melody in which you convey them to our hearts." "Ah, they deſerve a far better harmoniſt, ſacred Sir," anſwered Olivia —"they are the effuſions of my own Henry's muſe: we had always, as you have already heard, our hopes, that you would again take poſſeſſion of this little ſanctuary, and in our frequent day-dawning or twilight viſitations, we conſulted one another what would find moſt favour with the owners, and what be moſt worthy of the place—yet they were not conſultations, holy ſage, ſo much as impulſes—we have ſometimes dared to think them inſpirations, and in one—a very—very recent one—of theſe, my huſband, at my urgence, wrote for me the beautiful words to which you have done ſo much juſtice in your approbation—to theſe I attempted the imperfect ſounds you have honoured with ſuch welcome flattery. "If," continued Olivia, with uncommon fervor of air and accent, "if they have the ſmalleſt portion of the poet's fire, it was reflected

flected from him, and a fincere defire not to difgrace the fubject. Methinks there wants but the fociety of the poet to render it one of the moft bleffed points of time that ever hath been, or, indeed, ever can be expected to happen in mortal life!"

Caroline had left Olivia's chair, behind which fhe had placed herfelf during the air, and had gone fomewhat haftily to another part of the room—from thence fhe moved onward till fhe reached the private door that communicated with the chapel. Over this door was a projecting arch that formed a fmall porch, in which two feats were carved, gothick fafhion, in the ftone work. She had moved the curtain which was ufually dropt betwixt the *refectoire* and the entrance of the chapel, and, retiring from obfervation, had at firft fat herfelf down in one of the feats.

The enchantments, which Olivia had been fpreading, caught every ear and every eye; but the inftant fhe had ceafed to fpeak fhe miffed Caroline, and found her kneeling at the door of the chapel.

 "Ah,

"Ah, my ſweet ſuppliant," exclaimed Olivia, ſuppoſing Caroline to have been praying, "doubt not every wiſh, every prayer of your pious ſoul will, in due time, be granted! The whiſpering of angels thronging about my own ſoul aſſure me it will be ſo—but this night muſt be devoted only to feſtal gladneſs: the penſive pleaſures will have their hour: but let not this, I pray you, be one of them."

Olivia looked round her with much ſolicitude. Caroline ſeemed terrified. Olivia appeared anxious to ſay ſomething apart to her, but checked herſelf. "O! may her every deſire be followed by obedience like mine," ſighed Caroline, riſing with difficulty under Olivia's ſupport, and rejoining the wondering party. Olivia, wiſhing to give Caroline time to recover herſelf, prevailed on her friends to partake of her repaſt. Caroline found her terrors abate, but continued agitated.

Senſation is often too mighty for the mere appetites of nature: and, in a thouſand inſtances, the mind aſſerts its dominion

over our bodily frames. The collation was bleſſed, admired, and untaſted—but the health and happineſs of the fair foundreſs of the banquet, of the bard, and of the harmoniſt—of all within the domains of the caſtle and the abbey, were propoſed by the grateful monk, and accepted by all, in a glaſs of the Burgundy, which, Olivia aſſured the company, bending over Caroline, was part of the reſerve which had been made for the anniverſary of the day of her own honoured birth—when the aſſembled houſes of Fitzorton and Clare reiterated their benediction on Henry and Olivia. "It has ever," Olivia continued, "been ſacred to bleſt events: always conſecrated to love or to friendſhip. It marked the day eternally reſpected—that gave me the hand of Henry Fitzorton. It noted the birth of our dear, dear children, and now it is brought forth to diſtinguiſh the reſtoration of thoſe whom Olivia and her Henry, and their excellent brother, moſt honour, and moſt love." When this irreſiſtible toaſt had gone its round, the door of the *refectoire* was opened

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by John Fitzorton, who, accompanied by Mrs. Herbert and Johanna, came, he ſaid, "to reclaim his fugitives;" not without exculpatory hints on his own raſhneſs, for allowing Olivia to engage in ſuch undertakings, in the immediate ſtate of her health. Olivia, however, was too ſocially happy to have any fears for herſelf; and when Johanna and Mrs. Herbert ſportingly arraigned her for keeping them out of her plot, ſhe made her peace by an avowal of her ſelfiſhneſs, and a promiſe to be more confidential in future. Johanna then conferred with the Lieutenant, and the party were, by this addition, yet more intereſtingly blended one with the other. Caroline tried hard to rally. At length John intimated the neceſſity of diſperſing, and undertook himſelf the arrangement of the ſeparation. To the ladies who had attended him, were united Olivia and Jane Atwood, and with thoſe he ſought the caſtle, leaving True George, and the apothecary, to eſcort back the inhabitants of the abbey. "Ah! father of

ſpirits," ſighed Caroline, ſecretly, "if indeed a viſion, what a ſhadow was the laſt?"

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE OFFERINGS OF GENEROSITY AND PIETY.

BUT ſcarcely were the Colonel and his friends departed, ere father Arthur ſuggeſted the duty of returning a general thankſgiving to the Fountain of all Good, in a leſs uninterrupted way, and in a yet more holy place—even in the chapel. Caroline's myſtick terrors were reſumed, but ſhe ſtill laboured to conceal them.

They all entered the chapel, prayed, and returned into the *refectoire*. Caroline, who had been much diſturbed, petitioned ſtrongly for an excluſive privilege of paſſing a few moments in it alone, and of paying the homage which had been preſſing on her heart,

heart, ever ſince ſhe had regained her father's houſe, and her father's love. "O! ſuffer me, holy Director, to offer the devotion of a daughter, to my long-neglected mother's aſhes." "Not excluſively, deareſt ſiſter," ſaid the Lieutenant, "I muſt put in my equal claim." "On this occaſion we muſt all aſſert our privilege of pious love," interpoſed the monk, "you muſt allow us all to ſhare with you this tributary offering, my dear child." The plea was too ſtrong to be rejected, and Arthur leading the way, his party followed to the *cemetery* of the Stuarts.

Here too every awful object diſplayed the ſame hand of tender care, which had exerted itſelf in the chapel-houſe, and chapel. The lamp which, like the everlaſting fire, depended from the centre of the burial place, was lighted; and the coffin of Lady Stuart was diſtinguiſhed from the reſt by an holy taper, placed on a ſmall pillar of white marble at its head. This having been erected ſince their departure, every obſerver felt, at the ſight, an awful curioſity.

ſity. As they approached nearer to the pillar, they read, engraved on the marble, theſe words in honour of the dead :—' O, till parents, children, and the friends, who ſhall be found worthy of them, quitting this troubled earth, meet in the heaven of heavens, farewell! farewell!'

The groupe of friends and relatives now encircled the coffin, and never, perhaps, aſcended to that Power, who alone can read the thoughts of mortals, a more ſincere or fervent offering. Yet Caroline ſtill looked anxiouſly and carefully around, as if in expectation of the viſion ſhe had alluded to—but none appeared.

They roſe—embraced each other—and returned into the chapel—Caroline only lingering behind, and begging again a few moments, went back to the remains of her mother.

Her heart was ſurcharged with ſtrong emotions—and there ſhe hoped to relieve them. "O thou! who haſt been the boſomed companion of thy Caroline, remote as near," cried ſhe, embracing the coffin

fervently—" behold, once more, ſhe returns to thy venerated relicks—returns to them with better hopes, that he whoſe miſtakes we have both ſo often deplored, ſhall be all thy pure ſpirit can wiſh. Haply thy interceſſions for him have brought about this bleſſed change!—Continue them, I implore thee, till every pain of body, and error of mind, be eraſed from the records of eternal pity!—And, O! extend thy influence to Caroline herſelf—to her, who, alas! too ſoon bereaved of thy bright example, has not yet learned the unrepining, unmurmuring reſignation, which made thee, even while on earth, ſcarcely a being of this querulous world. Ah! endue me, immortal ſpirit! with a more perfect gratitude, for the varied and unexpected turns of relenting fortune which have of late attended me!—Enliven my ſenſe of the mighty bleſſedneſs of being reſtored to the affections of a parent!—O! beſeech the ſource of every good to give thy Caroline a more unmixt ſenſibility of the benefits ſhe is hourly receiving from the hand of friendſhip—

ſhip—to make her more truly thankful, for beſtowing on her the power of returning to this ſolemn ſpot, where ſhe ſeems to commune with the ſpirit of her angel parent,—and for being conducted to it, when every fading power of nature warns her ſhe ſhall ſhortly fill the ſpace, even that whereon ſhe now kneels—long ſince fondly appropriated—beſide her mother's—her Matilda's aſhes."

As if by this aſpiration the powers invoked had liſtened to her prayer and ſuddenly become viſible, Caroline lifted up her hands towards heaven as ſhe aroſe, and gazing earneſtly for ſome time, ſpread out her arms as if to receive the deſcending object, while a more than human ſmile pervaded her own countenance. Then continuing her poſition till ſhe ſeemed to feel ſtrengthened in the conviction, it was permitted the maternal ſeraph to impart the heavenly promiſe to her child: ſhe bowed her head in acknowledgment, and exclaimed with an exulting voice, "Bleſſed,

bleſſed

blessed assurance! in its faith will I live and die!"

She joined her friends with a mind renewed, and as she returned thanks for their patient attendance, plainly indicated to father Arthur the pious cause from whence her complacence had been derived. Recovering gradually the tone of her mind, she communicated her acquiescence to the rest. She pressed them to partake with her of the repast: a pious serenity of heart was spread from one to the other, and they returned by the arched passage to the abbey, without encountering any more impediments, real, or imaginary. "Perhaps then," said Caroline, softly to her own heart, "it was but a phantom of my brain." Jonathan, who with Jerom had returned from his journey, was waiting at the abbey door eager to inform them, that when they arrived to resume their ancient position in the sick chamber, they found the Baronet in a state that appeared to them something worse than delirious: and in that condi-

tion

tion he had left him in the care of his coufin Jerom, while he fhould have gone in fearch of the apothecary. The latter part of this intelligence was related while the perfons to whom it was addreffed made the utmoft expedition to the Baronet's chamber, where they difcovered Jerom and the old nurfe, and both the attendants, ftruggling to hold Sir Guife in their arms.

On the entrance of his friends, Sir Guife feemed perfectly to diftinguifh them, but in vain attempted to fpeak, and continued to contend with, and almoft break from, the efforts of Jerom, though now affifted by Jonathan. At length he was exhaufted, and then feemed to have gained the point for which he had contended, by covering his head in the bed cloaths. They gathered with difficulty from the broken and feeble expreffion of the nurfe, that, about an hour after their departure, as fhe went down ftairs at the Baronet's requeft to prepare fome drink for which he was impatient; fhe only ftaid about a quarter of an hour while the drink was warming, and on her return

return up ſtairs ſaw the poor gentleman in ſtrong convulſions, but why ſhe could not tell.

The ſoothing attention of his children and their aſſociates, each of whom joined their conſolements, at length ſucceeded in recovering the Baronet ſo far as to expreſs his joy in ſeeing them.

"O! my dear children," exclaimed he, "I thought never to behold you more. The moſt terrible apparitions, if indeed they were not more terrible realties,—have affrighted—afflicted me;—methought they entered my very chamber, approached my bed, threatened me with the moſt agonizing death, if I uttered a ſyllable;—then, methought two of them advanced to the head of my bed on each ſide, each planting a naked poniard at my throat, if I refuſed their requiſitions.—I was in total darkneſs, but methought, one ſaid to the other, we may go ſafely into Caroline's room: we know ſhe is from home. I ſaw her"—

"Saw

"Saw her!" exclaimed Arthur, looking at his friends.

"Yes," anſwered Sir Guiſe, "and therefore they ſwore it was the time moſt fitting."—"Fitting for what?" demanded Charles.—"I know not," anſwered the Baronet, "but I was, methought, preparing to make ſome anſwer, when, thank heaven! the two young men, with the other attendant you have provided me, came to my ſuccour. I muſt confeſs," added Sir Guiſe, "my thoughts had been heavily wandering; it is certain there was no appearance of any body afterwards."

"To be ſure," ſaid Jonathan, "his honour was ſo diſtracted mad with fright, that we had all enough to do to look after him: ſo that fifty men, or devils either, might be in the houſe, and we never the wiſer; but when I went down ſtairs and waited ever ſo long for your honour, I peeked and pottered about the premiſes, but ſaw never a living ſoul but little old Fitz, who had taken it into his head to come after me."

The

The reſt of the company confirming this, it was conjectured the Baronet had been actually wrought upon, either by a diſtempered fancy, a freſh attack of his remorſeful feelings, or a diſordered ſleep interrupted by horrid viſions. Indeed his weak ſtate of body, and nerves, and his habitual fearfulneſs, which had ſtill its degree of force, though his mind had of late known an unuſual energy, ſeemed to give a colour to this ſuppoſition. The apothecary declared it was phyſically poſſible. "As to that," ſaid Jerom, "don't you remember, couſin Jonathan, when you were one night in the clutches of the night-mare, that you cried out, the furies were hunting you with red-hot-pokers! and as the peſt would have it, I was your bed-fellow at that time, and a fine time I had of it; and by the ſame token you gave me ſuch *kelps* in the ſtomach, ſwearing you had hold of one of 'em howſomdever, and would make him pay for the reſt.—Yes, your honours, he took his own innocent couſin for one of the devils that had got into 'un; and ſo, no wonder

Sir

Sir Guiſe ſhould think he ſaw the incarnates who uſed to haunt him, which is natural;—poor gentleman, he has been hag-ridden long enough broad awake, and has at laſt dreamt about it."

Theſe remarks, with a quaint joke or two from the apothecary, threw over the ſolemnity of the circumſtance a ludicrous air, which the apothecary and Arthur thought it beſt to encourage, and ſo well carried on, that Sir Guiſe himſelf, in the end, ſmiled at his own chimera: the ſubject was diſmiſſed by George, declaring, that he had heard much of ſuch devil's works, and believed he had in his time ſeen ſome of them; but that he was very ſure if all the imps below, with the old one at the head of them, were to appear before a perſon who was reſolved to be good, and with the grace of God upon him, he might be juſt as ſafe amongſt them, as if they were ſo many kittens." Jonathan and Jerom, however, for the Baronet's more entire ſatisfaction, determined both to be his life-body-guards the enſuing night; and

Floreſco

Florefco promifed to fit open-eyed on the outfide of his mafter Arthur's door, to give notice if any body approached; "Ickle Florrey ufed to be fright at every thing," faid he, "but now only fraid of God." True George and the apothecary now went to their refpective refidences; the Lieutenant and Caroline withdrew t their chambers, but not till the latter had tenderly affured her father fhe could anfwer for the interceffion of his wife being added to that of his friends and children for every good that mortal could enjoy in this world, and angel in the next.

It is, however, to be noted, that although none of the abbey party which had returned from the chapel-houfe, made mention to Sir Guife of any of the ftrange appearances they had feen or heard in their way thither; nor indeed, had alluded to any fuch fancies or facts to any of their friends of Fitzorton caftle; being, on the one hand, afraid of increafing the alarm of the Baronet, and on the other, too much wrought upon by the impreffive realities which awaited them

in

in the chapel-houſe: the circumſtances could not but recur to them, while that unhappy invalid was deſcribing their dreadful influence on his mind and imagination; nor could the whole party help thinking there was a ſtrange yet incongruous analogy betwixt what they had themſelves ſeen, and what Sir Guiſe had related: and thus, while they imputed much of the overcharged colourings, and conſcious perſonifications of the one, to a diſtempered mind and body, they concluded there was more ſubſtance than ſhadow in what had aſſailed their own eyes and ears.

And in this deduction they were not a little confirmed by the report of the apothecary, as they were ſeparating. "Had not one of the ſingular ſights, we have ſeen, put a ſudden ſtop to my diſcourſe," ſaid this worthy man, "I was going to inform you, what I had, indeed, before mentioned to Colonel Fitzorton, that notwithſtanding all that gentleman's precaution, and my own, to have it ſuppoſed I was in expectation of more patients, as well as ſome

kinsfolk of the ſick quaker; and although your journey hither was performed with the utmoſt privacy, and you arrived at the dead of the night, a very general curioſity, concerning you, had been excited in the neighbourhood. The waggons too, and the appearance of Robert Irwin, and a more frequent reſort to, and return from, the abbey, in the Fitzorton family, particularly the viſits of Olivia, which could not be altogether private, much increaſed the maſs of wild conjecture, which flew from one village to the other. Yet the ſuperſtition of the villagers, covered every thing ſoon after. Tribes of gypſies who, as you muſt remember, uſually inhabited the foreſt, diſappeared ſoon after their benefactors left the abbey; but of late a new ſet has been obſerved to lurk about the woods, and hover near the houſe. Nay ſome have, as the report goes, been ſeen to come out of it. Now it ſtrikes me, that the figures we ſaw moving, about our underground path, were ſome of thoſe very gypſies, who may there, occaſionally, take up their lodging,

and

and who were poſſibly more alarmed at us than we at them." Caroline ſhook her head and ſuppreſſed a ſigh.

Arthur inclined to Burton's opinion. The Lieutenant ſaid, "it was more probable that ſome of the friendly party at the caſtle, had included thoſe ſeeming apparitions in the general magick of the evening, but rather did not chuſe, or forgot to mention it. "But then," ſaid Caroline, "how are we to account for my dear father's terrors happening on the ſame evening? and almoſt at the ſame period? and the dreadful word murder! None of the friends at the caſtle would extend the ſpirit of a fearful frolick to the ſick chamber of him they now ſuccour and protect. On the contrary, they would rather carry into it every amicable and ſoothing gueſt. No ſpirit of darkneſs could, even in mockery, proceed from them. Doubtleſs fancy may greatly deceive by her illuſive creations. Methought I myſelf, very lately, ſaw a ſpirit of light—but, alas! it ſoon flitted away."

## CHAPTER IX.

### A BENEVOLENT PROJECT.

IT is now the time for us to explain alarms and appearances, of a different nature, which happened about the ſame criſis, at the caſtle, and with which ſome of thoſe at the abbey are materially connected. When Colonel Fitzorton was returning home with Olivia, from her interview with Caroline, thereby breaking up a very intereſting converſation, he was extremely thoughtful and ſpoke little; but on gaining the caſtle he informed his fair ſiſter-in-law, who was always terrified at the ſilence of John, that he had received accounts from Partington, by expreſs, intimating Henry's reſolve to return. When they got into the library, "Partington writes thus," ſaid John, preſenting the following letter:

Our,

'Our impracticable caitiff resists all au-
'thority. He even mocks at oaths, though
'I have fulminated at him like an anathe-
'matising pope. But the villain is head-
'strong, a bull of Basan could not stop
'him. I threaten to put him in double
'irons—but he is wife-sick, and whimpers
'like a great boy to go home. As 'tis
'plain that our little fair-faced incorrigible
'Olivia alone can stop his career, I send
'to desire she will pronounce sentence of
'obedience and absence upon him, for
'another week or so, as I expect my bro-
'ther, the doctor, from the East, and
'have set my heart on his staying to greet
'him.

'Most insufferable,

'I remain your friend.'

"Well," exclaimed Olivia, as she returned the letter, "why may he not return? You must own I have been all patience and submission. But surely you have apprehended, though from the kindest motive, more

 than

than was neceſſary. For my part, as Sir Guiſe is ſo much better, and both his children amongſt his nurſes, I think the ſight of a boſom friend, and of my ſweet Caroline, muſt be what Henry's heart could moſt wiſh, and I augur from it every good to his health, as well as happineſs." "And I every ill," anſwered John. "I know his nature, and its limit of bearing ſuddenly any exceſs, either of joy or ſorrow. Grant me another week, my deareſt ſiſter, and if at the end of that term—" "I yield up," interrupted Olivia, "wholly my judgment to yours. It ſhall be ſo, and I will, though it feels very unnatural, iſſue ſuch mandates as you think neceſſary, to keep far from me him, whoſe preſence is the ſupreme joy of my life." "Long may he remain ſo!" cried John very tenderly. "It is only that his joy may be ſecured to him for years, that I deprive him of hours and days." Olivia's eyes ſhone with grateful tears, and begging pardon for her impatience, marked, with a ſubmiſſive hand, the ſentiments

which

which the Colonel dictated: he added some reasons of his own, confided in a separate letter to Partington, and the express set off. Olivia then related a plan she had sketched, in concert with Jane Atwood, to make the good Arthur's return to his beloved chapel-house, and perhaps that of Charles and their favourite Caroline, a little more fitted for their reception. "Now as all this is settled in our own minds as to what is to be done, and indeed almost every thing prepared, I do not ask you to take any active part on the occasion, my dear Colonel; but as you know I can fancy no undertaking of mine, however trifling, goes on well, or as it should do, till it has your sanction on it—next to the blessing of my beloved husband, and my God—and as you have thought fit to deprive me of my Henry's council, and James is absent, you must be their representative to throw out such a lure as the party may not be able to resist." She recapitulated all she had done to obey John, and expected a reward.

John Fitzorton was not the man, with all the aſperity we have ſeen on the ſurface of his character, to refuſe virtue its recompence; or to chill the ſpirit of benevolence by a frown. He ſmiled aſſent; offered every aſſiſtance; and the apothecary coming to the caſtle, with ſome good tidings from the abbey, with True George, the ready auxiliary of every good, it was reſolved *nem. con.* to call in the two laſt mentioned perſonages as aſſiſtants. A few more words paſt, as to the ſubterraneous paſſage, and the couriers ſet off. Their conduct on arrival has been already related. But the events that, in the intermediate time, took place at the caſtle are yet to be told.

"When our little project has ſucceeded ſo far as to bring the party together," ſaid Olivia to John, "and they are all as happy as I ſincerely hope the arrangement will make them, you can bring dear Johanna and Mrs. Herbert to ſee the effect. And thus every thing will be right but the abſence of our Henry: for after all, it muſt be

be allowed that, no man living—no, nor woman either—could give ſo much grace and ſweetneſs to a plot of this kind, the ſole point of which is to ſoften for a moment the wounds of the unfortunate and good."

Scarcely had her ever faithful heart poured forth, audibly and ardently, this tributary effuſion to its firſt and deareſt object, ere that object made his appearance. He had been, for ſome time, in a cabinet adjoining Olivia's library, where ſhe and his brother had been converſing, and of that converſation every ſyllable had met his aſtoniſhed ear; for although the door that communicated with the library was ſhut, a ſmall window, which looked into it, was open, and only a thin ſilk curtain parted the ſpeakers from the hearer. The latter had, indeed, entered the cabinet very ſoon after the former by another, and, indeed, the uſual door that opened into the library. Henry had, moreover, met the expreſs, juſt as he entered the park, received his own letter, and underſtood from the cou-

rier that John and Olivia were both well, and, indeed, when he was called into the library, to receive his commands, "their honours ſeemed main merry." As Henry, therefore, met no body either in the ſtables, or court yard, but ſuch ſervants as were immediately employed there, he paſt directly from thence into the houſe, and gained the ſuite of apartments that communicated with the library, without being obſerved by any of the family. Not, however, as the reader who has long been intimate with all his feelings, and all his merits, will eaſily believe, with deſign to ſteal any intelligence, or purloin any ſecret by that ignominious method many huſbands, and, perchance, ſome wives alſo, have thought a fair accommodation betwixt conſcientiouſneſs and convenience to adopt; but purely to give his return all the pleaſure his generous nature would wiſh to impart. Happening, however, to gain his ſtation in the cabinet juſt as his wife began to read Partington's letter a ſecond time, and aloud, with the ludicrous ſpirit in which it

was written, he ſat himſelf down quietly to hear himſelf abuſed; but, ſoon finding there was going to be formed a conſpiracy againſt him, he thought it but fair to fortify himſelf with as much of his *friendly enemies'* deſign as he could. Yet their deſigns were woven with ſo many other plots of infinite concern to his feelings, that he was bound to the ſpot by ſpells more potent than any the conſpirators where preparing to throw within the chapel-houſe, or, indeed, any which had viſited, in their moſt myſtick ſhapes, either the ſubterraneous paſſage, or the abbey. Every ſyllable that reached his ear, and not one could eſcape, went immediately to his aſtoniſhed heart, and the whole formed a chain of wonders and of miracles, that nothing but the voice of the guileleſs being that revealed them, or that of God himſelf, could have made him credit.

Irreſolute what courſe to take, he remained a while concealed, after his Olivia had teſtified her eternal ſenſibility of his merit abſent as preſent; but that freſh evi-

dence of her generous love called forth a grateful repetition of his vows to live only for her, and with this aſſurance he opened the library door, and notwithſtanding all he had heard ran into her arms. There, to the diſmay of his brother, and to the delight of his wife, he ſaid, that he felt himſelf ſo unjuſt, unkind, wicked, to be wandering from home when his Olivia was in circumſtances that aſked for the care of ALL her friends, that he traverſed the wiles of his dear abuſive Partington to detain him, left the Bury in an adventurous manner in the middle of the night, and left little Caroline in pledge, and a note to ſay, "if his friend had not had enough of him, he muſt follow to the abbey." The inexpreſſible ſweetneſs with which Mrs. Fitzorton received theſe kind motives of the run-a-way; the fondling of little John who ſoon came into the room; with the animated tokens of good will that ſat on the face of every domeſtick, when the myſtery of his firſt entry was removed by Olivia's ringing for ſome refreſhments, and the cordial wel-

come

come of John, who, in the midſt of all his embarraſſments at this ſudden event, was rejoiced to ſee the marks of ſo tender a meeting, gave to Henry's ſalutations a more than uſual energy. He felt himſelf able to ſpeak of the plots upon him, and to explain the fair ſtratagems always taken in wars, by which he had diſcovered them. But when he proceeded to ſhew that ſuch diſcovery went to ALL the family ſecrets they were carrying on at the caſtle, the chapel-houſe, and the abbey, and in dilating all this, that the ſame, or rather a more redundant, and unobſtructed flow of ſpirit and expreſſion, animated him, to the infinite bliſs of Olivia, who conceived it very naturally to be the effect of the ſeveral cauſes of her own happineſs, from the penitence of Sir Guiſe, the reſtoration of the ſon and daughter, his oldeſt friends, the joy of which ſhe had ſo long wiſhed him to partake—the fears even of the Colonel were, perhaps, for the firſt time, extinguiſhed by ſome bright hopes, that at length, the reconciling affection of the wife had emanci-

pated the very heart of Henry from all former ſlavery, as effectually as a newer miſtreſs had obtained the freedom, or rather a more lawful captivity, for the heart of Charles.

"There can now then be no earthly objection," cried Olivia, "to your brother's taking an active part in our darling plan, my dear Colonel. Nay no philoſophy—I want poetry, and ſong, and muſick, and all manner of things from earth and heaven. O, Henry! you could not have come back at a moment in which you and your muſe were ſo much wanted. I have myriads of things to tell you—a long, long, hiſtory of all that belongs to the dear perſons who are now amongſt us, and you ſhall have it all before we go; but at preſent Jane and I muſt beſtir ourſelves, for we have yet ſomething to do towards our little fête—I have alſo to preſent ſome new friends to you here at the caſtle—but we will not ſay a word to your old ones at the abbey about your return till the exact moment."

Imagining

Imagining ſhe ſaw negatives begin to cloud John's before aſſenting face, ſhe caught the hand of her ſon, and Jane Atwood, and left the library.

## CHAPTER X.

### A PROJECT.

HENRY and John Fitzorton were now brought together in the moſt critical period of their domeſtick hiſtory—and it was not till after they found they were thus by themſelves that they became fully ſenſible of it: yet the ardour of the former, in a great degree, ſtill marked his language and his look, and a ſentiment that bleſſed the innocence and unſuſpicious goodneſs of Olivia followed the parting ſteps of his wife. "And thanks to heaven, and to you, ſhe is as happy as ſhe is good," obſerved John. "My dear, dear, brother," cried Henry, ſmiling in tears, "to heaven, and to

to you would have been truer language— Let us—let us—converſe a little on the almoſt incredible events which lead to what I have juſt heard, Give them to me naturally and ſimply; juſt as they have been; juſt as they are." John managed this requiſition with admirable addreſs; he paſſed lightly over ſuch parts as would, he knew, have too much intereſted his brother's feelings, and detailed, at length, whatever was likely to give energy, or example, to his mind. At the ſame time there were few incidents of importance with which he did not make him acquainted, ſo far as reſpected the penitence of Sir Guiſe, and the amiable conduct of his ſon and daughter, in their relative characters, as children, and in all other particulars. He took blame on himſelf for excluding his brothers from the pleaſure he was conſcious they would have had in joining him, in his ſeveral plans, for the eſtabliſhment of thoſe who were certainly no leſs objects of pure love and care to them than to himſelf: but that, in truth, he conſidered himſelf as performing the

par-

part of guardian for the general good, and in that character thought it would turn out most for the advantage of his wards to keep them out of the trouble of very difficult and perplexed affairs, till he could see how far it would be possible to clear off incumbrances, and deferred laying before them the history of his trusteeship for their real felicity, till he could deliver with it a correct estimate of what, in such possessions, they were worth. But since it had turned out, that their worth in the tried virtue of some of their dearest friends, in the corrected vices of one of their foulest enemies, and above all in the daily, hourly, proof of the love of a sister and a wife, beyond all price, he hoped he should be pardoned. He thence took occasion to enlarge more particularly on the behaviour, and transactions of Olivia, as connected with his own in the affairs of the abbey. He shewed her commiseration for the suffering wicked, her honour of the good, her friendship for the friends of Henry, her forgiveness even of his foes, when they repented them of their enmity,

enmity, and her love of Henry—a love, ſaid he, pure and permanent, blended with every thought, wove into every action, mixed with every object, and joined with almoſt every word. In ſhort, a purer, or more eloquent, appeal for penitent vice—a more generous offering to perſevering virtue, or a more honourable diſcharge of fraternal duty, amidſt private heartfelt diſappointments, has rarely ſurpaſſed that which was then paid by John Fitzorton.

Henry Fitzorton had a ſoul to feel it. He felt it, indeed, in all points but the one which gave luſtre to the reſt. Of many touching, and trying features in the character and conduct of his brother, Henry was ſtill ignorant: yet he knew enough to be convinced John Fitzorton was to be ranked amongſt the firſt of wiſe, juſt, and honourable men, and that to him he ſtood indebted for the neareſt and deareſt obligations: and in the preſent inſtance, he felt moſt profoundly the generous principles on which he had acted, and ſaw clearly into the motives from which he had ſpoken; and when

the narrative clofed with the eulogy of Olivia, although by a thoufand filent emotions he refponded to all the preceding particulars, he drew the eulogift to his bofom with a fervor that after a thrice repeated embrace he dropt from the arms of a brother on his knees to God—"It is thou, thou only muft I fupplicate, O fountain of all power, to make me more worthy of fuch friends—of fuch a brother—of fuch a wife! on each, on all, be thy everlafting bleffing!"

"Deareft Henry," faid John, while he raifed him, "I am beyond all payment in your debt: your conduct is at once my rebuke and my glory. Inftead of winding my way from one myftick path to another, with a caution that might feem leading to the haunts of infamy, rather than to the receffes of innocence, and really trembling from fear of difcovery at every opening of my labyrinths, as much as if I were actually carrying on a plan of fraud, I might have gone on in the ftraight and direct line of amity and confidence, and gained from your copartnerfhip the fame end, by more expe-

ditious

ditious and eaſy means. The apology, therefore, that I have already found it neceſſary to make to Charles Stuart, I now repeat to Henry Fitzorton—for every pleaſure your Olivia would have ſhared with you on the points I have conducted, have been withheld from you by me, and I was even in the act of projecting new concealments, in order to keep you"—"From old misfortunes," interpoſed Henry.

"It remains with you," reſumed John, "to act as your judgment may decide, as to the immediate ſcheme at the chapel-houſe. It is too late to recal the invitation, and if it were not, there could no ſtrong reaſon be given for the cruelty of with-holding the pious father Arthur from his offerings in the little temple, which his poor heart has conſecrated; nor for checking Olivia in the glowing career of what *her* poor heart has projected. I think it, however, likely that ſome of the abbey family will remain with Sir Guiſe, and a ready reaſon to be given for your declining to go is"——"Brother," interpoſed Henry, "I am

am rejoiced, though ſurprized at my dear Charles's transfer; yet on that ſubject there is much to be ſaid. The transfer to the ſecond was made in a long abſence from the firſt object."—"There, to be ſure," anſwered John, interſecting the diſcourſe,—"both you and he have had an advantage over—over—many others." The words, 'many others,' were ſubſtituted for a name that hung trembling on the verge of the ſpeaker's lips. "Ah, my deareſt John," obſerved Henry, "had my friend, the Lieutenant, been expoſed to the temptation of ſeeing before his eyes the ſcenes of his former paſſion,—had he poſſeſſed only the faintly imitated, the inanimate likeneſs of the features that firſt won his heart—"—"Brother Henry," anſwered John, "it is very poſſible—I—know it is—a—a friend of mine was—unfortunately—once in a ſituation of that ſort—I—therefore know it is very poſſible—to be in the almoſt conſtant habit of ſeeing, and ſpeaking to the originals of ſuch pictures—and whether the affections were transferrable or not—I am certain

certain he never harboured a thought that" ——The hafty, and lucky entrance of Olivia put a ftop to John's obfervations. She came to relate the farther progrefs fhe had made in her project—but added, fhe had inftant employment for the mufe of her darling Henry. The reader already knows the nature of that employment—and juft as fhe had placed before him pen, ink, and paper, and had whifpered the fubjects, defiring John would go down ftairs with her, and leave the bard to the infpiration of friendfhip, Mr. Partington, preceded by a volley of accufations, fet forth in his moft vehement ftyle, burft into the room, calling out, " An efcape, an efcape! the caitiff has robbed, and plundered me of my treafure—taken out of my houfe a thing I chofe to fet a value on—his abominable felf, and thofe who harbour him are as bad as himfelf." " My dear railer," faid the Colonel, jocularly, " I am afraid I fhall be henceforth entitled to your politenefs, for I have led you, amongft many others, into thefe ftrange round-about miftakes." John then entered

entered into ſome partial explanations, after which, taking the Squire by the hand, he exclaimed, " And now, my good friend, if you will accompany me into the ſhrubbery, and grant half an hour's patience, I will relate to you the reſt." Partington eaſily ſaw he had heard as much as could ſafely be confided in the preſence of Olivia, and went out with the Colonel, obſerving, as he took off his hat with unuſual civility— " yes, I begin to think you are one of my worthy gentlemen!"

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE ENTHUSIASTS.

WHEN John Fitzorton had told his friend Partington all that it was neceſſary for him to know, he introduced that gentleman to his *protegees*, Mrs. Herbert and his Johanna, aſſuring him they were candidates for his moſt diſtinguiſhed incivility,

and that they were as likely as any women he knew to deſerve it. "O, I have not the leaſt doubt," anſwered Partington, when he was firſt preſented,—"but I ſhall be obliged to ſet them down in my liſt of abominables: I ſee it in both their faces." "Indeed, Sir," ſaid Johanna, trembling, betwixt fear and hope, "you cannot think how uneaſy I have been leſt you ſhould take it into your fancy to be polite to me." "And for my part," obſerved Mrs. Herbert, "I ſhould look on myſelf as a loſt woman were you to pay me a compliment, or make me a bow." Partington had long ſince heard their general, and ſome of their particular misfortunes; and therefore, though he never ſaw either of them before, he clapped on his hat, which, in truth, ſeldom quitted his head, but to expreſs his averſion, and walked off with them into the library, arm in arm, abuſing them all the way, as an earneſt of what might farther be expected. The Colonel followed, and ſeeing the cabinet door open, they ſtopped there.

Henry was ſitting at his deſk with the pen ſtill in his hand, Olivia leaning over, and ſuiting what he had written to her guitar, alternately running to another part of the library, to try it on her harp.

"Huſh!" whiſpered Partington, "we muſt not diſturb the raſcals, while they are in that ſort of mad fit."

The poet and muſician proceeded in a ſubject that touched every chord of their hearts; perhaps neither of them heard the obſervations, or ſaw the obſervers; yet tears, which by the poſition he who ſhed them concealed from Olivia, filled the eyes of Henry, and were not eaſily prevented from dropping on the lines he had compoſed: ſimilar drops ſuffuſed the lovely face, and trembled in the voice of Olivia as ſhe adapted them to ſpontaneous harmony; the genuine poeſy of nature animated by the muſick of a benevolent heart. Olivia, with diffident ſweetneſs, propoſed the adoption of an epithet in one of the verſes, as more auſpicious to ſound, but feared the ſenſe would be injured: the

 ſound

ſound was her own, the ſenſe Henry's: Henry adopted it, and confeſſed the ſenſe was much improved. To the bloom in Olivia's cheek on this compliment, there is no deſcription. It was the bloom of gratitude and love. Who can paint it? Henry, in turn, improving on himſelf, altered a thought, and gave it poetick expreſſion. It occaſioned the change of a whole diſtich, and its aim was to prove that the recovery of a loſt treaſure was a richer poſſeſſion than if we had never been bereaved. "O, heaven! what an idea," exclaimed his wife, "and ſo it is—you mean the recovery of the little chapel-houſe—the treaſure of Arthur's heart—it extends alſo to the chapel itſelf, and what is yet more ſacred, to the ſolemn burial-place of the Stuarts—the treaſure of our Caroline's heart—Ah, how ſhall I give ſound to this? help, help your deſpairing Olivia, my dear, dear Henry: let the poet inſpire the muſician; or, O, rather, let the fountain of every pure and bounteous idea, who beſtowed the thought, aſſiſt its melody: it deſerves the

muſick

mufick of the fpheres, and to be fung by its angels." "Then it fhould be fung by Olivia," exclaimed Henry, rifing from his chair, and folding her with enthufiafm: "none but an angelick nature can, furely, attribute to every thought, and word, and deed, the beft and pureft motive. By Providence, I fwear, every moment of my life convinces me that I can never, never merit thee." "Not merit! O, ingrate to that Providence," anfwered Olivia, "you merit every thing that is good."

The clofeted auditory now came from their recefs. They advanced even to Olivia's harp without fpeaking, or being fpoken to. John had been weeping, and was ftill extremely foftened: O, thought he, can it be in nature that Olivia fhould love more ten-tenderly than fhe is beloved!—Mrs. Herbert's bofom throbbed at the remembrance of recollected happinefs—her eye infenfibly turned on John; but fhe fuffered it not to tarry. Johanna, almoft fhrinking from herfelf, timidly fighed to her own heart as fhe approached Olivia, "Ah! Charles, Charles,

 how

how canſt thou ever fancy any reſemblance betwixt thy poor Johanna and Olivia?" Partington had ſtruggled betwixt his nature, and his habits a conſiderable time; and as the one or the other obtained the maſtery, he was now ready with an ejaculation of unmixed tenderneſs, or began a bleſſing with its inverſing accompanyments—at length, he got ſufficiently into his old humour to exclaim, as he took the hands of Olivia and Henry,—"I can only ſay, that if you do not quite murder me before I get back, I will here grant an act of oblivion to all the abominations that are paſt." Partington demanded a ſhare in Olivia's plot—"Unleſs," ſaid John, looking ſignificantly at Henry, "you think it beſt that you and Partington ſhould ſtay and abuſe one another comfortably at home." "Moſt readily," anſwered Henry, with generous earneſtneſs—"our little gratulatory offerings are juſt finiſhed, and then——" "What! not go to ſee and hear the effect of your ſweet ode, and beautiful hymn?"—"My brother," ſaid John, "may be fatigued

fatigued after his journey, and with his unexpected flight to Parnaſſus: the air for odes, you know, is very far, indeed, up the poetick mountain, ſiſter." "And hymns, I ſhould think," obſerved Partington, "being heavenly, can blow only from the ſummit—Is'n't it ſo, you clambering caitiff?" "Fatigued!" cried Olivia, reſponding to the humour, "O! how little do philoſophers and gentlemen farmers know the unwearied ſpirit which poeſy inſpires!—But I feel the reaſon that induces the bard to decline honouring us with his company. He is aſhamed of his muſician."—"Aſhamed of her!" ejaculated Henry,—"I would ſhew her, with pride, to the hoſt of heaven!" "I am ſenſible," reſumed Olivia, "that ſhe has by no means done him juſtice—but, on a meeting of ſo many dear and unexpected friends—methinks, I beg pardon—I dare ſay, you are all right—but I had ſo ſet my heart on his preſence—the very laurel—yea, the crown of my poor little project, elſe, I hope, I ſhould not have been quite ſo unreaſonable."

 And

And then, perhaps, for the firſt time, in all the years of their—to her, bleſſed—to him, alas! unhappy marriage! Olivia Fitz-ortorn dropped on her huſband's hand, which ſhe held to her lips, a tear of diſappointment, and Henry was the innocent cauſe!—"Go, brother," whiſpered John. "O! ever dear, too tender and too good!" cried Henry, "I thought Mr. Partington might want company—I thought that my ſudden, and unexpected appearance might, perhaps, in a manner, derange the plan." —"Or, perchance," cried Olivia, correcting herſelf, "might alarm our beloved friends—Caroline is, indeed, much out of health; and her ſpirits have ſuffered. You will hardly know her, Henry; I am aſhamed not to have thought of this—forgive my precipitance. It would be wrong—Yes, I ſee it would." At theſe words ſhe walked backwards and forwards in the room, by which ſhe relieved not only herſelf but the reſt of the company. John's hopes revived, as to Henry's remaining at home, and he was collecting arguments and reaſons as to the

the propriety of that meaſure, on the ground of Olivia's own remarks; and Partington was gathering together a round of ſcurrilities to back the Colonel; while Henry, with very worthy feelings, ſat down to the vain attempt of finiſhing his poetry.—In the midſt, however, of his employment, which, alas! was rather that of making long, crooked marks, than legible words, he ſaid to John—ſtill marking, and the tones of his voice as irregular as the ſtrokes of his pen—" He hoped Caroline Stuart was not very ill—not—not—not in any danger?" This was the only time he had mentioned her name to his brother, or any of his friends, or even given an alluſion to it, except when his wife's converſation made it inevitable, ſince the time he intimated a wiſh, ſanctioned by Olivia, to have ſome of the abbey furniture bought in for the former owners, and even then it was by letter. John making, therefore, full allowance for a queſtion, which tender friendſhip ſtrictly warranted, he preſſed the hand

of Henry moſt affectionately, and returned in whiſpers a conſoling anſwer. Olivia, after walking, had ſat herſelf down by the ſide of her harp, bending penſively over it, and now and then drawing from it a ſaddening note. Suddenly, however, ſhe ſtruck the chords to happier ſounds, and, looking at her friends through the ſpaces of her harpſtrings, ſtill enlivening the air, ſhe pauſed to exclaim.—" I believe there is ſomething of magick even in an inſtrument of muſick. It has, this moment, inſpired me with a thought to turn all the jarring of our late objections, as to dear Henry's being of our party, into harmonious concord."

The reſt of the company were again thrown out of their arrangements.

" You may remember," reſumed Olivia, ſpringing up, after preſſing her lips on the harp, and proteſting ſhe loved it dearly as a friend, " you cannot indeed forget the weſt door that leads from the little cypreſs walk to the cemetery, and thence aſcends by ſteps to the chapel. Of that door, knowing

ing it is never opened but at the time of ſepulture, I have not yet delivered the key, but I know where to find it in a moment. Henry and I had occaſion for it ſeveral times when we were carrying on our monumental labours. There, my Henry, you may ſee, yet be unſeen. I will drop the curtain before the door of the chapel-houſe; and as I mean that to be the boundary of the firſt evening's exhibitions to the oblivion of as much as may be of every melancholy thought that lies beyond, there will not be the ſhadow of a reaſon to ſhut my Henry out of a ſight of the happineſs to which he has ſo largely contributed, while we are all ſhielded from what we were apprehenſive of before. What a lucky thought! Now don't fall into your philoſophies again, dear John; and pray do you, Mr. Inſufferable, ſtand prepared to join my brother, in eſcorting the ladies of the caſtle, when 'tis *their* cue to ſwell the ſcene. The poet I ſee has not a diſſentient word to offer, and ſo the muſician will go fetch the ſacred key, and ſummon Jane to conclude

the preparatives." She left her aſſociates to finiſh her generous plan, and left them too without a reaſon to check her. "That abominable villain," cries Partington, "carries all her points. After all, the lordly oak, man, is but as a ſwitch to that little twig-looking ſhrub in bloſſom, called woman. Heigho! I ſhould not wonder if one of theſe days a thing of this kind ſhould ſteal the heart out of my tough old trunk. By the bye, where is that Mrs. Herbert gone? From ſomething I ſaw, I take that lady to be an arrant ſcoundrel. Well, I'll have no hand in this matter. You are a couple of wiſe caitiffs, and I leave it between you. Settle it, and let me know; I'm ready for any miſchief you propoſe." How ſhall it be ſettled, my very dear and good Henry," moſt affectionately enquired the Colonel, when Partington went out, "you ſee our predicament." "Beſt of men and of brothers," anſwered Henry, "truſt me as far as I will truſt myſelf. I am clear, even at this moment in which the pulſes of my head and heart beat with a violence I can neither

neither help nor account for, I am clear that it would not be in the power of any earthly being—no not the being neareſt to omnipotence, in potency over my ſoul—to draw me from the honour, eſteem, reverence, and almoſt worſhip, due to my angelick wife, and which it has long been my pride to make happieſt of the happy. But I know not, as yet, my weakneſs or my ſtrength, whether to conſider the thronging emotions that now fluſh my cheek, ſhake my frame, and poſſeſs my boſom, as ſymptoms of terror, or of triumph."

Henry manifeſted vehement and tumultuous agitations while he ſpoke. "Perhaps the ſenſations which are now penetrating the central manſions of my ſoul," reſumed he, catching eagerly the hand of John, "may be the reſult only of too many ſurprizes ſuddenly accumulated, and mingling together,—perhaps I only want tranquillity to arrange, ſelect, and ſeparate them,—perhaps—and O join me in ſupplicating God that it may,—perhaps the love, the virtues, the good faith, the guileleſs

mind, of my dear, dear Olivia, may riſe paramount, the unrivalled victor, and lawful ſovereign of my breaſt. Perhaps the eye, and voice, and hand, of long loſt friends, will encounter mine, with gentle and ſalutary greeting, cordial to each, to all. Brother, I am determined on the trial, the viſible and inviſible method propoſed is favourable. Fear me not. I will glide with the ſilence of death along the well-known manſions of the dead; and if I find that my hour is not yet come, for the only ſort of aſſociation which the holy peace of my Olivia requires I ſhould form with any other human creature, and which is alone what I ought to give or to receive, in that moment I will retire unheard, unſeen, and never again be led into a ſimilar temptation."

Amidſt all the fiery wildneſs of this ſpeech, the inconceivable rapidity with which part of it was uttered, and the fearful ſtarts that attended much of the action, there was, on the whole, ſuch a genuine and generous virtue in the idea, and ſuch

con-

connexion in the plan, that John, who had been more depreſſed by fear than elevated by hope, now came to a kind of compromiſe with thoſe paſſions, and thought it beſt to let the propoſal take place, and truſt the direction of the event to that Providence, which, when human circumſpection proves inſufficient, and ſometimes, alas! counteracts, as if in mockery, its own too attentive care, can render the dreaded circumſtance the cauſe of producing the very effect of which ſhallow plotting, laborious mortals, ſuppoſed it would be utterly ſubverſive.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE TOMB OF VIRTUE.

THUS have we explained one of the extraordinary appearances which met the eye of Caroline Stuart; giving at the ſame time a view of Henry Fitzorton's return to the

the caſtle; and we have unfolded theſe points and the incidents with which they connect after, rather than before, their taking place, that the reader might enjoy the like impreſſion of the magick ſcenery of the chapel-houſe, unbroken by anticipations. But events, alſo, of great moment, happened in the houſe of Fitzorton after theſe chapel houſe ſcenes were over; and having ſettled thoſe tumults of the Stuart family that fell out about the ſame period, this is the due place to go on with progreſſive circumſtances.

Caroline Stuart was not the firſt who had bent the knee at the tomb of her mother. Henry Fitzorton had done homage there before her. But that was not his immediate devotion. When the conference betwixt himſelf and the Colonel ended, he repaired to that hallowed ſpot where his own progenitors lay inurned, and where the ever-friendly Fitzortons and Clares, united even in death, mingled their ſacred duſt. Thither, ſometimes with Olivia, but oftener alone, had he directed his ſteps.

There,

There, would he recite the ſtruggles of his head and heart, his infirmities, his fortitude. There, conceal his tears from the living, and, confide them to the ſpirits of death. His laſt viſit was of a milder ſort: he ſought the aſhes of Sir Armine in ſmiles: for he ſought it to pour forth his congratulations; to aſſure the awful inhabitants, which ſurrounded him, and chiefly they whom it moſt concerned, his honoured parents, that after ſtruggling with ſolitude and ſociety, with the powers of love and of inſanity, with the rooted paſſion of his heart, and the horrible ſuggeſtions of murder—ſelf murder, all, all the ſad effects of one dire miſtake, the conſtrained diſpoſal of his hand; the virtues of Olivia, had weaned him from the fell intents of deſpair and death, and won him back to reaſon and life. He no longer loathed the earth; his heart had become ſuſceptible of comfort; he honoured the choice which his father had made for him; he had ſacrificed his own; he loved his children; his brothers were parts of his own exiſtence; his neigh-

bourhood

bourhood was dear; and, bleſſed be God! he could at laſt ſurvey *all* its objects without terrour. The dark cloud that ſeemed to cover the heavens and the earth, again admitted ſome rays of light, even as if re-created to his eye; it chiefly beamed from the power he ſtill had to bleſs his wife; for himſelf, the die had been caſt; the bolt would rive where it ſtruck; he was a wreck, but he had, perhaps, been the plank to ſave others from ſinking: and he was thankful.

Such were Henry's confeſſions in the vault of his fathers, when he firſt felt the influence they deſcribe. But motives of a ſtill more affecting kind now drew him to thoſe manſions. "O my father! my father!" cried he, in rapid and earneſt ſupplication, kneeling by the coffins that held the reliques of both his parents; "now aſſiſt your ſon;—now ſtrengthen your Henry;—let not the deep ſcar that has ſeamed the wound, be again torn open. Spare, I conjure you, the ſon whom your miſguided,—but bleſſed hand, has laid long ſince on

the altar.—And thou, my mother, whoſe cold duſt is more precious than the vital power which warms theſe claſping arms, aſſiſt thy huſband's prayer.—O! let not the victim who has ſo lately ſurvived his ſacrifice be bound again!—Driven back on all he loved,—on all he feared,—alas! on all he ſhunned! Oh, ye ſpirits of heaven! who once inhabited theſe holy ruins, do I invoke!—and thou, O venerable father of my Olivia! do thou become a ſuppl'ant with the God of Power in the cauſe of thy beloved child!—Pray alike for the huſband and the wife, and all their little ones!"

Having breathed theſe aſpirations, he returned to the caſtle: there waited for him her, for whoſe felicity he had importuned the dead, and the ſpirits that live for ever. Lovely, and ſcarcely leſs pure than one of thoſe,—ſhe preſented to him the fatal key that was to give him once more the view of Caroline Stuart. "All is on my part ready, my Henry," ſaid Olivia; "but ſurely you are unwell,—unquiet,—the approaching ſcene will chear you: come, deareſt,

let

let love conduct you to friendſhip. You muſt not feel theſe things too ſtrongly." She led him to the weſtern door, then paſſed haſtily through the place of ſepulture, aſcended the chapel, ſhewed him the manner how Jane and ſhe had contrived the curtain ſo as to give him ſight into the chapel-houſe, and a ſecurity from others; then after many a tender expreſſion, went round to the other door, accompanied by her Jane, and with a heart throbbing with benignity, waited to confer happineſs, impatient of delay, only as it retarded the communication. The cauſe of that delay on the part of Arthur and his friends, has been made known to the reader. On the part of Mrs. Fitzorton and Jane Atwood, it was filled by rendering their preparatives more acceptable: while Henry, gliding with ſteps now well ſuſtained, and now faultering, correſponding to the riſings or ſinkings of his ſpirit, alternately ruminated in the burial place, at the tomb of Lady Stuart, and at the altar of the chapel.

At

At length the moment came, and that moment was decifive. He heard again the found of Caroline's voice: he faw from his fecret ftand her down-caft eye, her fainted air, her facred form: and he faw the change which forrow, long-fuffering, corroding cares, and perpetual vigils, had caufed. He haftily defcended into the burial place, and concealed his heart-felt groans, and fhed his burning tears on her mother's coffin. "Soon, ah! foon, muft fhe join you here, O mouldered beauty!—but, alas! her figure has already been the prey of the tyrant. The canker of grief, I fee, has eaten into the core of her heart, and with immitigable tooth is ftill devouring her alive."

He returned to his place of obfervation. The room was filled with objects dear to his thoughts: yet he faftened but on one; his trembling eye, now deluged with tears, and now parched by a fever of the foul, fixed on, and followed Caroline. Olivia's mufick was unheeded: his own poefy extinguifhed: all that beauty, love, and benevolence

volence had done to grace the ſcene, was covered from his view as with the mantle of death.

Almoſt ſuffocated with ſenſations, and their proper reliefs controuled, he again deſcended into the chambers of darkneſs: he wept, ſupplicated, and again returned. Exhauſted, at length, he ſat down on one of the ſeats of the porch. Scarce had a minute elapſed, ere the other ſeat was filled alſo: filled by Caroline. The mourner had there attempted to weep and to pray, unobſerved by the happy. Her ſight was dim, and her hands croſſed over her eyes. A heavy ſigh broke from her heart, and penetrated that of Henry. Alas! he was within its breath. An anſwering ſigh heaved his own boſom; and he roſe; Caroline ſtarted. Henry had moved ſome paces, and was half loſt in the darkneſs of the chapel; but a faint light from the *refectoire*, by the aperture in the curtain, and the opening which Caroline had left on effecting her concealment, gleamed indiſtinctly on the chapel. A figure moved before her

more

more awful, more affecting than all ſhe had ſeen in the ſubterraneous paſſage. It had the motion of Henry: but in the next moment it ruſhed forward, and was ſeen no more.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### A VOICE FROM HEAVEN.

HENRY pauſed awhile in the burial place, to wiſh he had been numbered amongſt its inhabitants, before he had witneſſed the ſcene—from a farther view of which he was hurrying—and then paſt on. He reached the caſtle a conſiderable time before the reſt of the party—before, indeed, the Colonel and Partington, with the ladies, could have got to the chapel-houſe in order to eſcort Olivia. He luckily therefore, gained his chamber, which was that his father had uſed, without interruption. The very ſword with which John had puniſhed

niſhed Sir Guiſe Stuart, hung over the chimney piece. Henry looked at it, and traverſed the apartment with wild and irregular ſteps. On the flaſh of a ſudden thought he cloſed the windows on the inſide—locked and bolted his door—He took down the ſword, drew it from the ſheath, and examined its point—"No," ſaid he, "this—this—may not be the inſtrument. The blood which was ſhed in defence of a father, ſhall not be waſhed out by that of a ſon, even though that father has made life inſupportable."—He replaced the ſword—but his ſenſes were ſtill unſettled, and the dire image of ſelf-deſtruction appeared ſtill to poſſeſs him. Perceiving a movement about the bed—he leaped up, and throwing aſide the curtains, demanded furiouſly who dared to interrupt him? "Only little John, papa," exclaimed a ſoft voice, "Your own dear little John, who has crept into your bed juſt to get a kiſs, and a good night, from you and mamma—when you came home—as you all ran away from me, and left me to myſelf, a whole—

whole

whole evening, juſt as if I had no papa or mamma at all—which God forbid—for what would poor little John, or great John either, or even ſiſter, with all her beauty, do without them?"

"A voice—yes, it was a voice from heaven!" exclaimed Henry, running to the bed. "Dear, dear boy, you have ſaved your poor father—you have ſaved him from—" "From what, papa? O! how cold you are!—do come to bed; little John ſhall warm you in his boſom—juſt thus," ſaid the ſon, carrying his father's hand to his breaſt. "Ah! let us warm one another's hearts, papa. And I have not ſaid my prayers yet—ſo we may ſay them together."

"And ſo we will, my bleſſed deliverer!" cried Henry, tenderly kiſſing the child, and lying down by his ſide, "and Johnny ſhall beg of God to love—to forgive his father—and God will hear him." "Oh, that he will, and you too papa—for he hears all good people. I can ſay all you ſet me by heart—mamma has heard me every

every night ſince you were gone. The belief, the lord's prayer, and the ten commandments, without miſſing a word—now only hark." Hereupon the innocent prattler repeated thoſe holy ordinances, in which Henry, with repentant ſpirit, fervently joined: and when he came to the inhibition of murder, an icy horror ſhot through his conſcious heart, and as he thrice repeated the words—"O! wretched man!" he cried, "what did thy raſhneſs meditate? —Wouldſt thou have put to death, at one ſtroke, father, wife, children, and friends? and expoſed thy immortal ſoul to the wrath of the Eternal?" "O! what wicked man would have killed all thoſe, papa? Do let us ſay over our prayers again—to beg God Almighty to forgive him too: for, mamma ſays, the good ſhould pray for the naughty, if they be ever ſo wicked. O! how often have I heard her pray for that bad—bad Sir Guiſe of the abbey: very often, indeed, but not ſo often as ſhe has bleſſed good papa. Ah! how ſhe does love papa!—not more than Johnny though."

Saying

Saying this the foother threw his arms fondly round his felf-rebuking parent; drew him, by many a fold, clofer to his little heart, and compofed the troubled foul to fenfations of piety and peace. The interceffion of a fpotlefs child was offered up for the evil thoughts his defpair had induced. And after he had again and again, fupplicated the throne of mercy and of grace, the kind reftorer of haraffed nature funk him to repofe.

When the company returned, Olivia's firft enquiries were directed towards her hufband. Somewhat alarmed at hearing he had not been feen, fhe ran through the rooms it was ufual with him to frequent, and at laft coming into her chamber fhe found both the father and the fon faft afleep in each other's arms.

Tenderly impreffing a kifs, and breathing a figh of pride and happinefs on them both, fhe made her report below ftairs, to the comfort of the anxious Colonel, and to the fatisfaction of all.

As Henry awoke he ſaw his brother John ſtanding by his ſide. "And how fares my dear, and ſtill good, Henry?" enquired he, with generous ſolicitude.

"Well—yet not good. Well—yet moſt wicked. But queſtion me not to-night; in the morning I will unfold myſelf."

"Shall we not ſee you amongſt us? Will not your abſence ſeem ſtrange?" aſked the Colonel.

"Let the fatigue of my journey, and ſubſequent walking, watching, &c. explain and excuſe it. I am unequal to company at preſent; but if Olivia brings me a glaſs of wine, after your repaſt, I will drink her dear health in it—but not till the withdrawing hour. Meantime, I will to bed, and this bleſſed boy, to whom I owe more than life, muſt be our companion for this one night. I cannot endure the thoughts of his removal now—do tell his mother ſo. See how ſound he ſleeps, brother. Such is the repoſe of innocence."

As Henry made theſe reflections, he careſſed

reſſed his ſon—repeated his obligations to him—took his little hand from the ſpot where it was laid—on his father's breaſt—to preſs it to his lips—then replaced it; while John delighted with the effect, without knowing there was any thing aſtoniſhing in the cauſe—Henry being at all times an exemplary father—went down ſtairs, and with faithful pleaſure related what he had heard and ſeen.

When Olivia ſoon after withdrew, ſhe found that her little John and Henry had again fallen aſleep, and ſincerely uttering a prayer for both, including in it her abſent daughter, and all the friends whom ſhe preſumed ſhe had made as happy as herſelf, ſhe crowned a day of benevolent exertion with a night of undiſturbed repoſe.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE VOICE STILL HEARD.

HENRY, when he awoke, complained of an extreme head-ach, and imputed it to the heat of the apartment. Alas! the heat was in himſelf: for it was towards the end of October, and the air had been ſharpened in the night by a froſt. "It is very early, I believe, my ſweet Olivia," ſaid he to his wife, whoſe pure and light ſlumbers were eaſily chaſed away, although they had been ſerene; "yet I think," continued he, "that a turn or two in the garden will do me good." "I will riſe and attend you love," anſwered Olivia. Henry over-ruled this. "Conſider," ſaid he, "I ſtole home to bed long before you, and it is but fair that you ſhould be even with me: another thing is, I propoſe to return preſently, and beſides the dear boy, you ſee, ſleeps ſtill.

 Huſh

Hufh, we fhall difturb him poor fellow. Tell him, if he fhould wake before I come back, to remember me in his morning prayers, and kifs him for me a thoufand times, for his evening ones—and O! tell him too, that I live only for himfelf, his fifter, and his mother."

The fondeft, deareft, wifhes of Mrs. Fitzorton being ever included in performing thofe of her hufband, fhe begged him to guard againft the early air, which however warm it might feem to him in the chamber, would be different out of doors, and then fhe refigned him tenderly to himfelf.

At the foot of the great ftaircafe that led into the grand hall, from which there were two doors, the one commanding a view of the woodlands of the abbey, the other leading to the grounds and park of the caftle through the fhrubbery; he ftood for a few moments, divided in his thoughts, at which of the doors to go out:—as if following the impulfe of nature, his firft movements were towards that which led to the manfion of Sir Guife Stuart: yet turning from thence

 abruptly,

abruptly, even while his hand was upon the bar that faſtened it, he hurried to the one which led into his own grounds, as if in obedience to the dictate of duty and reaſon. But he was much ſurpriſed to obſerve, either that ſome one of the family had gone forth even ſooner than himſelf, or that his ſervants had been very negligent, for the door was not only unbolted and unlocked, but very ſlightly cloſed.

He entered the park, croſſed into the ſhrubbery, and walked up and down the firſt path that preſented itſelf. His mind crouded with thought,—a miſt blending with the froſt, had rendered objects dreary and indiſtinct. Every drooping ſhrub, and every flower in the train of autumn were loaded with heavy dew, half diſſolved and half congealed. As the haſty ſteps of Henry bruſhed them away, he exclaimed— "Yes—all nature is in tears!" he ſighed and paſſed on. The ſun roſe, and gradually diſperſing the fog, diſplayed the later beauties of the year more clearly, but ſhewed

ed them in their decline. Henry, after exercife too violent for either felicity or health, ftood leaning againft an alcove on the outfide: he faw the withering leaf fall alike from the loftieft tree, and the moft lowly fhrub—"Such is man!" thought he, "and fuch the equal fate of the ambitious and the humble!" As his eye furveyed the different objects within its reach, and beheld on all the vifible figns of ficknefs and decay: "All nature is dying," cried he aloud—"fee! even at the point of death! then what is man!"

"Immortal!" anfwered a voice immediately from behind the place where he ftood. It was the voice of John Fitzorton. The brothers embraced. "For once," faid the Colonel, "my dear Henry, I am a more early wanderer than yourfelf. My night was unquiet, but, I truft, your's was fweet: and yet the remarks I heard you juft now make, or rather the tones in which they were expreffed, feem not the refult of a refrefhing fleep."

"Deareft brother," cried Henry, "if

ſleep, which is but for a night, is ſweet, what muſt be the ſleep of death?"

"Still ſweeter," anſwered John, "for that is eternal waking—I have wholly recovered the tone of my mind, Henry, ſince I came into the garden. Obſerve the wide ſpreading ravage of the vegetable world as it lies around us in ruins."

"I have obſerved it with a ſinking heart, and it has made me deſcend, atom as I am, into a more modeſt ſenſe of my own inſignificancy, brother," ſaid Henry, with an air of ſelf-abaſement.

"And my heart, on the contrary," reſumed John, "it has elevated from this low earth to the heaven of heavens—from things periſhable to powers that ſhall never know corruption—from my decaying body to my everlaſting ſoul. That proud oak, my brother, may, in this poor world, maintain its ſtation far longer than its lord, even though the honours are now falling from its top; but when its very roots ſhall be trampled into duſt, by the power which putteth all mortal things under his feet, I truſt,

truſt, in the pardoner of offences, and the recompencer of virtue, that Henry, John, and James, Fitzorton, and all who are dear to them, will be rejoicing in the unfading bliſs of eternity. Be proud then, my brother; aſcend to the dignity of yourſelf—riſe to the ſublime height of your own nature."

The eyes of Henry were ſtreaming with tears, yet they were raiſed to heaven, and, "O!" he cried, "it is from the pardoner of offence! not the recompenſer of virtue! that Henry muſt have hope in death.—My brother," continued he, "I am weak as childhood—but, alas! without its innocence! Yet what have I not attempted—what will I not attempt to fulfil every duty—to avoid every ſnare? O thou my brother, and my friend—thou chriſtian—philoſopher—guide and conduct me back to ſcenes of leſs agoniſing thought, and keep me there.—Forbear, ah, ſtill forbear to queſtion me. I have kept within the conditions. I aſcended from the gloomy repoſitories of death, and ſaw the one creat-

ed being moſt afflicting, moſt dear to ſight—ſaw her ſcarce living—about to be numbered with their cold inhabitants, yet I did not ruſh into her preſence. I felt her heart-ſick ſigh upon my cheek. I ſaw her ſink almoſt at my feet—yet raiſed her not to my arms—but left her—left her on the cold ground, and with ſavage ſpeed ruſhed from her fainting form. You had my promiſe, and it has not been broken. So far virtue and my brother are obeyed. But I muſt move again from hence. Beings far, far more valued, more valuable than myſelf, demand it—my wife! my dear wife! my children! my friends!—yet I know not how, or where—nor can I think—O think for me!—Something, and ſpeedily, muſt be done, or all muſt be loſt—this throbbing head, this panting heart—all—all foretel it!"

He clung round his brother's neck—then ſtarted from him, and then again enfolded him—now incongruous, now coherent, as he ſpoke—and woman's love, no, not the love of his Olivia, could more fondly re-

turn

turn his embraces, ſoothe his wandering, pity his weakneſs, or confirm his hope, than did the rugged John Fitzorton in this trying moment. He kiſſed his cheek, wiped away the tears he found upon it, yet bathed it with his own. "Ah, my unhappy Henry, my deareſt, and ſtill good, brother, —virtuous even in agony: yet, O! be comforted, think on the more diſaſtrous wretch—alone and hopeleſs—to whoſe ſad fate I pointed in our late converſation, ſhut for ever from his object, by bonds yet ſtronger—bonds which even death could not remove—yet forbade the privilege of eſcape, and condemned by inexorable neceſſity—even by virtue—ſtrange myſterious fate! to ſee her for months, for years, the only form that could ever truly enchant his eye, to hear the only voice that was ever muſick to his ear—not like the voice of the Syren that once lured and betrayed,—and to obſerve the only mind which has ever conveyed to his idea the moſt perfect image of truth and goodneſs; ah, think on him —on him, not culled from fancy's painted

ſtore—but one, whom I have known, a real victim, and had you known him too, you would have wept his ſorrows, and if not forgot your own, have owned that they were bleſſedneſs to his. Indeed you would. Yet never, never ſhall ſhe know the cauſe of his deſpair."

All the powers of wonder and of pity ſeemed ſuddenly to overſpread the face of Henry! and as he examined the countenance of John, with an earneſtneſs he had never looked into it before, retiring gently from his arms, he appeared to puzzle awhile betwixt conjecture and diſcovery, and then run again into his brother's embraces.—"*Shall* ſhe know!" exclaimed the aſtoniſhed Henry! "Is he ſtill exiſting? ſtill one who ſees that form, who hears that muſick, who obſerves the workings of that heavenly ſoul?—then is he a wretch indeed! O brother, I ſhould commiſerate that man were he a villain! but were he good, and juſt, and virtuous, even ſuch a man as thee, my brother, I ſhould mix adoration with my pity, and do homage to him as to a wounded

ed god, could ought of divinity receive a wound!"

Henry appeared to be ſinking from his brother's arms, and had bent one knee on the ground as he ceaſed ſpeaking:—even as though he thought his cloſing words applied: but John hurrying him up, as if not unconſcious of his meaning yet more than he expreſſed, cried with a voice of ſome trouble, "Huſh, brother, for heaven's ſake huſh: we are obſerved!"

"Yes, indeed," ſaid little John, who came running up the alcove walk, followed by Olivia, "you can come into the garden to hug my uncle, Mr. Papa, but leave poor Mamma and I to ourſelves."—"I am come here, my deareſt Henry, to invite you to a diſh of coffee, which, on account of your early riſing and walking, may do you good, ſo I got up to make it myſelf; and if the Colonel has been as early a rambler as yourſelf, it will be of ſervice to him likewiſe."—"Nor ſhall it be refuſed, my ever good Olivia," ſaid Henry, "I will anſwer for us both: and this bleſſed boy ſhall partake,—

yonder too, I see Partington and his ladies. Let us lose no time then."

A tranquil, nay, a pleasant breakfast ensued, even to the surprize of Olivia herself, who, from little John's perplexed account, and the last night's discourse, and from her own morning observations, had her fears that Henry was again out of health or spirits. John was at first the most taciturne on this occasion of the whole party, but resumed himself in the course of the repast; and Henry, from whatever motive, was for the whole of that day more tranquil than he had been at any period since his last arrival at the castle. Partington, whose spirits were always elated or depressed by the fair or foul weather of those he loved, now found the Fitzortons, who had long been his grand barometers, more calm and temperate, than from the late stormy violences he had reason to expect; he therefore gave a loose to his accustomed scurrility, mixed with a thousand good-humoured turns, with such effect, as settled him in the best opinions of Johanna and Mrs. Herbert, who,

who, on their part, contrived alſo, by their endearing behaviour to Olivia, to be ſet down amongſt his moſt atrocious incorrigibles.

## CHAPTER XV.

### SUBTERRANEOUS SOUNDS.

ON the day following, however, the tempeſt, which had thus blown over, returned: it had rolled to a diſtant quarter, but rolled back to its point. Henry in great diſorder, ſought a ſecond conference with John. "My brother" ſaid the former, "there is no bringing all men's minds, any more than their perſons, to an equal ſize, or ſtrength. I honour the greatly good and greatly ſuffering being, who lives unſubdued by temptation; but I cannot reach his virtue; I cannot profit by his example; I will not diſgrace myſelf or diſ-

treſs

trefs you by telling you where thefe truant feet, guided by my erring heart, would have led me in the twilight of yefterday, when, you remember, I petitioned for and obtained a folitary hour."

"To the abbey, no doubt," anfwered John, much difcompofed. "Fatal was the hour in which my erring heart conducted thither its old inhabitants. You have paid them a vifit, I prefume, and in one moment brought to nought the laboured project of many a diligent hour. Shallow-thoughted mortals! behold, here, another leffon to humble the pride of human forefight! I am fallen with the fabrick I raifed, and fhall bury my friends, brother, fifter, and all whom I would have faved in the ruins!"

"O no, my brother!" anfwered Henry, "you have erected a temple to pity, friendfhip, honour, and, I truft in God, to happinefs! I, and I only, feel myfelf unworthy to enter its facred gates and do homage there? Miftake me not—weak, fragile as I am, I have not invaded, by willing rafhnefs, the fanctuary where your generous hand has

placed

placed the penitent and the mourner. But, blushing I confess, that I bent my misguiding steps that way:—Yes, I took a forbidden path, the one rarely trodden—and yet, even there, I met my dear, my long lost"— "Caroline!" said John. "No, her brother," said Henry. "I am sorry for it," observed the Colonel, "the Lieutenant was rash, and forgot the bounds prescribed; the bounds of honour."—"Within those bounds I saw him," answered Henry. "Then the rashness was yours. Yet you said, you had not intruded." "Nor did I, the rencontre happened in a place where I could expect to meet only the form of melancholy;—the subterraneous passage.—Even there my friend rushed upon me unawares from an angle almost at the cavern's mouth. So far from expecting, he furiously seized my throat, demanding the name of the lurking ruffian, the midnight robber he had at last detected? A drawn sword was in his hand,—and, in the next instant would have been in my heart, had not the well-known voice and name of Henry Fitzorton arrested

arrested the stroke. 'O gracious heaven! I should have murdered my friend, my dear, dear Henry Fitzorton!' ejaculated he in an agony, and as he spoke, a groan—no doubt the work of terrified fancy—seemed to sound near the place where we stood. He threw down the instrument of death, and pressed me to his bosom. My friend was in my arms. 'I ask not, O, my Henry!' said he, 'the state of your heart—you, no doubt, have heard the state of mine: but if yours be not all Olivia's, or, even if it be, forbear, I conjure you, to invade my sister's peace!' He then hurried to other subjects, talked to me of fearful sights, of frightful sounds,—told me that such an air of mystery had there invested the abbey, both within and without—he was himself that night come forth armed to attempt a discovery, and had encountered strange appearances, which eluded his pursuit. He informed me that Jerom and Jonathan, with the intrepid Arthur and his fearless Floresco, were also on the watch in their different stations. He concluded, alas! by giving

giving me credit for virtues I have never poſſeſſed, applauded my conſiderate, my godlike benevolence, as he called it, in adminiſtering comfort to the wretched, myſelf unſeen: and then ended by obſerving, that as the proſperity of his family had been derived from the kindneſs of John, ſo would the peace of his ſiſter, dearer than all other poſſeſſions, be protected by Henry Fitzorton!—Ah! my beloved brother, I could only anſwer by ardently ſtraining him to my boſom; pouring out my bleſſings on his houſe; on my knees aſſeverating, that if the power were mine I would watch and combat for years unwearied to repel its enemies,—and then, alas! unequal to farther converſe, I ran back with trembling ſteps from the cavern into the foreſts, diſguiſing my agitation in ſudden illneſs, and yet heaven knows, that was not counterfeit.—Behold the hiſtory of my unſought treſpaſs;—behold, dear John, and prevent its repetition. I have loſt all confidence in myſelf; others, therefore, ſhould not truſt me.—Oh! think of ſome

means

means to ſave me then from myſelf. Your plan for that ſafety ſhall be mine."

"Generous Charles, and worthy Henry! I truſt a fair reward awaits ye both," cried the Colonel.—"Your narrative, brother, has filled me with various objects for reflection; but the one which more immediately preſſes, is that which regards yourſelf—the grief of this poor, conflicting boſom." Here John, in his uſual way, ſat himſelf down to ſolitary thought, while Henry perceiving his ſon at ſport in the garden, went to his little conſoler and preſerver, as now he called him, hoping to gain compoſure enough to bear ſuch endearing ſociety before he returned to his wife.

Although the time advanced more near when Olivia would naturally require and receive the tendereſt ſupport from the attentions of her huſband; yet, as it was altogether improper to convey her, at ſuch a moment, from her comfortable home, where all had been long ready for, perhaps, one of the greateſt trials of human nature, even though

though human kind is thence continued on the earth; yet, as the preſſure of unforeſeen events and ſurrounding circumſtances, had made the environs of the caſtle and the abbey more perilous to all the inhabitants even than they had ever been before; and, as on every poſſible ground of diſcretion, Henry's virtuous and manly propoſition ought to be adopted, it was ſettled by the good Colonel, that his brother ſhould again be ſtolen by Partington—that little John, in order to be exchanged for little Caroline, who was ſtill at Bury, ſhould be of the runaway party;—that Mrs. Herbert ſhould be truſted with the ſcheme;—and that juſt as it was about to take place—the coach at the door, and trunks packed—John ſhould betray the conſpiracy, and undertake to bring about Mrs. Fitzorton's conſent.

This arrangement was only part of what was forming in the Colonel's mind. He believed that now Sir Guiſe was much recovered, the whole abbey family might be removed, at leaſt, beyond the track, and

out

out of the obſervation of his brother: and this, he thought, would be a wiſe meaſure, free of all other conſiderations, as it would convey them from a ſpot ſurrounded with dangers. He imagined Henry might then come back, and that while his worthy mind was employed, as he well knew it would be, in the ſoothing offices of which his Olivia would then ſtand in need, he ſhould have no aching void left for the diviſion of a wandering image: and, indeed, he began to think it would be beſt for the caſtle family to ſettle elſewhere, when ſuch a meaſure could ſafely be propoſed.—All of this plan, which was then proper for Henry to know, was imparted; Henry yielded, and was much ſoothed by the idea of little John being his companion—"and yet, alas! my brother," ſighed he, "what have I to hope from the preſervation of a few days, or months, or even years!"

"Every thing, even from a few hours," anſwered John. "The evil which has been growing for half the life of man, may, by the Providence of God, be in a moment

removed.

removed. Let us rely on that Providence, and, by taking what at leaſt appear the beſt meaſures, hope, that they will be directed to that end." Henry ſighed, and aſſented. —Partington was ductile to every generous aim. All was prepared with ſecrecy and diſpatch; and while Partington was handing his party into the coach, railing and raving in whiſper—the Colonel, who had been conducting his impeachment, and detailed his charges, brought round Mrs. Fitzorton, to aſſiſt him in apprehending the conſpirators. —"I ſeize you ladies and gentlemen," ſaid John, "in the name of Olivia." "O thou moſt incorrigible good-for-nothing traitor!" exclaimed the Squire, bundling in little John, who enjoyed the ſcheme at his heart; and ſeeing Johanna with Olivia, "I have a good mind to have that handſome huſſey into the bargain." Then ſhutting the door, after he had leaped in himſelf, he flouriſhed his hat, crying— "aha! this is trick for trick! one run-away job for another. Let the raſcal ſee if he can eſcape again—I have him now,

father

father and ſon, old dame Partlet, and the family-coach into the bargain—Drive on caitiffs—drive on, and never ſtop till you get to the end of the world."

The poſtillions, ſetting it all down as a new frolick of their old Squire, who was a great favourite with them all, obeyed orders, and away they drove. But tears ſtood in the eyes of Olivia.—" It is but for a day or two—and to bring back my ſweet little niece, and Partington's brother, the phyſician, who is daily expected at the Bury, from the Eaſt-Indies, and, in ſhort, to ſtrengthen and enliven our party on their return—and ſo e'en let them go, deareſt ſiſter," ſaid the Colonel. " Well then, ſighingly, anſwered Mrs. Fitzorton,—" we muſt endeavour to do without them a little; but ſtill I know not the time when I could ſo ill ſpare them."—" Would to heaven I could any way render the loſs of their ſociety leſs irkſome," ſaid the ſoft and diffident Johanna; " but, perhaps, the good lieutenant, and—ſhould the Baronet's health permit—that of Caroline, might do much."

—" Truly,

—"Truly, ſweet maid," anſwered Mrs. Fitzorton, "if any thing in nature could fill the void which the abſence of my huſband and children always leaves, the conſolations you propoſe to me would have their effect; yet, under the moſt gloomy ſenſations, ſuch ſociety muſt be moſt welcome to my heart."

"I will myſelf go to the abbey," ſaid the Colonel, "and make report how far our ſociety may be admiſſible."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### SOUNDS ABOVE GROUND.

HAVING thus, in ſome ſort, reconciled both the ladies under his protection, John Fitzorton directed his ſteps to the abbey, where, however, many objects of increaſing difficulty remained to be adjuſted. For, although the generous conduct of his unhappy

happy brother, the tender difplay of the true and modeft feelings of Johanna, and his own ftill unyielded power of mind, had foftened the paft fcenes, the profpect of the future rofe to his view, convolved in clouds, the difperfion or even clearing of which feemed to require an energy greater than any he had yet employed.

To him, therefore, who can bring light out of darknefs, he breathed an earneft prayer as he took the way that led to the abbey: for John Fitzorton was not a convert to that weakly proud doctrine which depends wholly on human means; but always thought,—and as he thought—he acted, the philofophical, enlightened, and ennobled chriftian character. As he proceeded towards the abbey, he encountered Burton upon the back of his little horfe Bufy, pofting to the caftle. The whole detail of the apothecary immediately defcribed the terrors under which his patient laboured, in confequence of the illufive appearances—adding thereto an account of thofe which he and his friends had feen

the

their way to the chapel-houſe—“ I know nothing about ſuch ghoſtly fancies,” cried John; “ but the ſooner your patient, and indeed, all his family can get from them the better. In a word, my friend, I am projecting a general remove; for as matters have turned, I ſee no tranquillity either of ſoul or of body, in this once peaceful and happy neighbourhood, at preſent; our firſt operation is on Sir Guiſe Stuart; if we can but get him by any means into a travelling ſituation, I think, I ſtill ſee a path out of all our perplexities. Burton declared he had hopes, if no new phantaſms and diſturbances, real or imaginary, fell out, a few more nights' reſt would give to his patient, and to all the family, the degree of ſtrength neceſſary to the occaſion.”—“ Meanwhile,” anſwered the Colonel, rejoiced at this intelligence, “ as you muſt know Henry has been hurried back to the Bury by Partington, the limits of our poor priſoners at the abbey may be enlarged; and to that purpoſe am I now going to the abbey; but ſince we have met, you, my good friend,

will beſt ſettle this matter, while I return home to make preparations for the general movements." The apothecary anſwered, that he would loſe no time in ſetting the captive brother and ſiſter free, and turning round the nimble Buſy, gallopped back to the abbey.

But neither Charles nor Caroline were in a ſituation to enjoy even the bleſſings of liberty. For ſcarce had Henry exchanged the mournful, but affectionate adieus with his friend, in the ſubterraneous paſſage, ere the terrified Floreſco came to implore the Lieutenant to follow his ſteps; then led him ſome paces farther along the cavern, where an object aſſailed his eyes, that almoſt reduced him to the condition of that object. He ſaw his beloved ſiſter ſtretched on the cold ground, and in a ſwoon. Fain would he have numbered that heart-piercing ſight alſo amongſt the viſions that ſeemed to hover round, but alas, it was the real Caroline, and the groan which ſtruck the doubtful ears of Charles and Henry, was hers.

Impelled by her apprehenſions on the delay of the Lieutenant, and auguring ill from his enterprize, ſhe had impulſively explored the winding paths of the cave, and ſhe reached a part near which her brother had taken his ſtation, even as the words—"murdered! Henry Fitzorton! my deareſt friend!" were burſting from his lips. She fell lifeleſs at the ſound—;and when ſomewhat reſtored, finding herſelf ſupported by her brother, ſhe exclaimed, "what murdered! dead!"—her ſenſes ſtill wandering—"Your friend!—Henry Fitzorton! murdered him! it was then a warning voice—a warning ſhade I heard and ſaw in the chapel—O God! O God!"

The dreadful image again weighed down, and cloſed every faculty, and again ſhe fainted in the Lieutenant's arms. She was deaf to all his explanations. Meantime, Floreſco had ſummoned father Arthur, and his party to her aſſiſtance, and by them ſhe was conveyed, even as if the hand of death were on her, back to the abbey. In vain did the Lieutenant aſſure her the words ſhe

heard were only part of a ſentence, the object of which went to congratulate himſelf that he had eſcaped the dire murder which impended. She was beyond all ſenſe of hearing, and remained ſo for many hours. At length her ſtruggles terminated in ſleep; finding, when ſhe awoke, that ſhe was in her own chamber, with her kind attendants, to which were now added both the apothecary's daughters—ſitting round her bed, and the ſtill faithful, ſtill favoured little Fitz repoſing on his carpet at her ſide, and the Lieutenant anxiouſly waiting the moment to explain, the whole appeared to have really been the effect of her late diſtempered fancy in ſleep. "Yes, it muſt be a dream," ſaid ſhe, "but the moſt terrible that ever fancy teemed with—has any thing happened, my good friends?"

"No, deareſt Caroline," anſwered Charles, unwilling to hazard more until ſhe was more able to bear even happy tidings.—"And is all well here, and elſewhere?" queſtioned ſhe. "All," replied the Lieutenant, "our father mends faſt—we hope to ſee him down ſtairs

ſtairs ſoon." "Indeed!" ſaid Caroline, ſmiling, "and are none of our friends or benefactors come to any thing grievous?" "None," ſaid the Lieutenant—"What, nobody murdered?"—"Heaven forbid!" anſwered the Lieutenant; and juſt as he was going to unfold the cauſe of her fears, ſhe exclaimed, "Then certainly it was a dreadful dream, and I will try to think of it no more." Burton was of opinion that at preſent it would be beſt to let that idea continue; obſerving, that by the time it was chaſed away by a connected recollection of circumſtances, more happy effects would be derived from their developement. This plan was, therefore, adopted, and the ſeveral confidants received a charge from the Lieutenant, not to hint the ſubject until, if ever that ſhould be the caſe, it was brought forward by himſelf; and even then," ſaid he, "father Arthur, or I, had better relate it."

The connected recollections, however, ſoon came to the mind of Caroline, when, at her deſire ſhe was left to herſelf: every

dreadful ſound was repeated to her ear, and ſmote her heart: "Yes," ſaid ſhe, "it is beyond diſpute Henry Fitzorton is murdered!—and, O heaven and earth! his boſom friend!—my brother! ſome dire miſchance! it could not be deſign! my brother has been the murderer—it was in that place of deluſion and darkneſs!—O, moſt terrible to thought! yet, alas, there remains not a hope! it could not be a dream, that, agonized by ſuſpenſe, I left my father's apartment—wandered forth into the ruins, and entered the cave of—death—of murder—murder—of the nobleſt, beſt of beings—and, alas, ere this, perchance, of the poor widow, Olivia.—Raſh, dreadful deed! and the wound will be mortal alſo to him who gave it. Will Charles put Henry to death, and ſurvive the blow? impoſſible! let me not reproach him—ah, rather let me try to ſoothe, to comfort, to reconcile him to life—to life! and can that be made ſupportable to the murderer of Henry Fitzorton?"

Theſe images gained ſtrength from reflection and from after-obſervations. She perceived the Lieutenant aſſiduouſly waiting an opportunity to unfold himſelf; ſhe remarked that on her obſerving him with unwonted ſcrutiny, he appeared to ſhrink from her inſpection, and yet that he laboured to communicate. She found that he even began a kind of tale, and then broke it off abruptly; and although this proceeded but from an obſervance of his own plan, preſettled betwixt him and Burton, ſhe referred it all to the one point moſt horrible; and thereupon, not doubting but that her brother was the victim of conſcious miſery, ſhe reſolved on her part, not to renew the ſubject in his preſence, but, if poſſible, to mourn it in ſecret. Accordingly, whenever a word or look from any of her attendants, or from the Lieutenant, eſcaped, that might tend thereto, ſhe indicated by an immediate change of diſcourſe that it was unwelcome to her: and as it was hence ſuppoſed to be her wiſh there ſhould be no revival of the circumſtan-

ces, it was agreed upon by her friends never more to advert to them. But what farther eftablifhed Caroline in her full belief, was the never having feen any of the Fitzorton family fince the fuppofed event. "Alas," faid fhe to herfelf, "they are all deeply mourning the calamity, and fhun, more affiduoufly even than before, thefe ever ill-fated walls."

Her former diftreffes, acute and manifold as they were, the lofs of her father's love, the difappointment of her own heart, even the untimely fate of her ever-honoured and lamented mother, all feemed lefs heavy to her finking foul than the death of Henry Fitzorton.

Yet fhe did not allow even this bitter aggreffion to interrupt the duties which ftill called her towards her father; the moment fhe could rife from the room to which her fatal mifconception had confined her, fhe paffed her time as ufual in the chamber of Sir Guife. Her cares this way, at leaft, were attended with a fuccefs that carried a ray of confolation to her heart even

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in the zenith of its deſpair. Sir Guiſe daily gained ſtrength; a time was fixed for his leaving his chamber, and Burton pronounced that he might venture in mid-day to air himſelf, under the ſupport of his ſon and daughter.

Penetrated by this chearing information, Caroline exerted herſelf to the utmoſt, not to throw a cloud over this proſpect! Sir Guiſe had more than once aſked after the miniature of his injured wife, and Caroline took it from her boſom, and he preſſed it to his lips. She led him into her own apartment at his ſtronge urgence, and when his eye caught the family picture, he kneeled down to it and wept. He recognized in the furniture ſeveral of thoſe very objects which had rent his conſcious heart at Robert Irwin's; the ſight of them now excited emotions leſs terrifying, but more ſalutary. His feelings were ſtill wounded by reflection, but not harrowed by remorſe; yet he was conveyed back to his apartment in a ſtate to move the pity of a foe.

Nevertheleſs the morning found him

 again

again refreſhed. In this ſituation of affairs, the Lieutenant, who had received inſtructions from Colonel Fitzorton to watch the firſt favourable opportunity, told Caroline, not without the difficulty, however, which the firſt ſuggeſtion of ſuch an idea to his ſiſter, in her circumſtances, would excite, that he had ſome thoughts of propoſing to Sir Guiſe a change of air. "Indeed," ſaid he, "I am of opinion, we ought all to quit the neighbourhood—and an occaſion offers, by means of a friend, for its being done almoſt immediately and with the neceſſary caution—and that carriages have been ſome time in readineſs:"—"Carriages!" exclaimed Caroline. "Yes," ſaid the Lieutenant, "ſo many ſad events and ſtrange matters environ, and are hourly happening in this place, that, methinks, we cannot leave it too ſoon—and leave it for ever!—Think of it, my ſiſter," ſaid he, and left her.

If there had wanted a confirmation of the murder, this would have ſupplied it to the trembling Caroline. "He would fly from the

the ſpot where the blood was ſhed," thought ſhe! Her own blood froze in her boſom.— "But blood calls for blood," exclaimed ſhe. "Alas! perhaps, my brother's own life is in danger!" Rouſed by this thought, ſhe ran to the Lieutenant, and eagerly, yet fearfully whiſpered, but without confeſſing her ſuſpicions, "that ſhe would be ready at any hour; but that if it ſhould be thought more ſafe for him to go firſt, ſhe would follow with her father the inſtant he was able, and a ſecure place ſhould be found." She ſpoke in great diſorder, and as the Lieutenant was going to anſwer, came an immediate ſummons from Sir Guiſe, whom the meſſenger reported to be dying. Every power of Caroline's ſoul flew to this point: ſhe forgot that ſhe had another cauſe for grief in the world.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE DEATH OF A SINNER.

THE Baronet was labouring under an internal malady, notwithſtanding all appearances; and though it had not, hitherto, ſtopped the great functions of life, had been undermining his conſtitution by a ſlow, but conſuming progreſs. After a whole day of compoſure, during which his pulſe, eye, and appetite gave to general ſpectators, every hope of increaſing convaleſence, he dropped into a lethargic kind of ſleep, in the midſt of which he rent the air with the moſt piercing ſhrieks, ſucceeded by long heavy groans that terminated in ſighs and tears.

The paroxyſms became more and more frequent, impairing, at each return, every

power

power of body and of mind. In truth, the confcience of this unhappy man was aroufed beyond the power of being appeafed by the ufual propitiations. It was the never-dying worm which fenfibility of crime had, at length, lodged in his bofom—and in his moments of reflection fo penetrated and devoured his heart, that he was, perhaps, in the only tolerable ftate when every ray of intellect was quenched in delirium. In both thefe afflicting fituations Caroline remained a martyr to her vigilance, and want of exercife as well as of repofe; fhe feemed, indeed, fearful that the flighteft movements might difturb him. She doubled the carpeting—intreated that her brother, the apothecary, and every attendant in their going up or down ftairs, might ftep as lightly as poffible. With her own hand fhe once more adminiftered his medicines, and fmoothed his pillow, and the leaft creak of the door went jarring to her heart. In a word, every thing which a good and gentle nature could devife, did this affectionate daughter practife in her father's fick

chamber;

chamber; though ſick herſelf almoſt unto death.

At Burton's particular requeſt and intreaty, a conſultation of two neighbouring phyſicians was held on Sir Guiſe, whoſe unuſual calm, and apparent tranquillity, had been more dreaded by the apothecary than the former violences; the latter indicated, at leaſt, muſcular force, but the former denoted exhauſted nature.

With very little variation he continued in this condition four days; in the progreſs of which he exhibited, at moments, ſuch unequivocal marks of ſhame, contrition, and ſelf-abaſement, joining fervidly in the offices of which the pious Arthur made him partaker, that thoſe whom moſt he had wronged would have felt their reſentments buried in their charity. Alas! thoſe whom he had moſt injured were, indeed, more immediately under his eye, and moſt aſſiduouſly engaged in offering to comfort him;—for Charles Stuart, though leſs conſtant in his attendance than Caroline, was equally earneſt in trying every power to conciliate him

him to himſelf, to diminiſh his fear, and enlarge his hope.

But one outraged being there was who had not yet met his corporeal eye ſince the arrival of his ſon and daughter, though in mental viſion he had nightly, almoſt hourly, beheld her, and while he bleſſed her name, he execrated his own—the intereſting, the good, the lovely and all-forgiving Jane Atwood, a ſincere penitent like himſelf, had not yet been ſeen ſince his illneſs, though thrice that amiable girl, prompted by the trueſt goodneſs, had been conducted by True George to the ante-chamber, from whence, when occaſion favoured, ſhe entered the appartment, while the unhappy man repoſed; then, after gazing until ſhe could endure, for pity's ſake, to look no longer, ſhe would ſteal away, leſt the ſight of her ſhould encreaſe his pangs; but ſtill remained in the ante-chamber, either until he again dropped to ſleep, or tidings of his health were brought by the lips of Caroline, or her couſins, or caught by her own liſtening ear. At length the hour of Sir

Guiſe Stuart approached; but it had advanced gradually, and as it came more near, it moved towards him with more tranquil ſteps. The forlorn ſtate, above deſcribed, had relaxed its horrors, and for ſome weeks, reaſon once more viſited his mind, which, though the animal frame continued to waſte away, permitted the man, covered with conſcious crimes, to feel even in this world the bleſſed influence of penitence unfeigned. The deep-toned groans, and heavy elaborations of the breath, yielded benignly to the milder ſorrow of ſilent tears, or of ſighs, which rather relievved than aggravated his conſcious heart. The death of a ſinner was coming on, and in its progreſs furniſhed an important example to the wicked, of juſt diſtributions both of reward and puniſhment, in the preſent world. As the firſt months of his ſickneſs and confinement had paſt in the ſharpeſt pains of body and of mind, in the direſt retroſpects of the paſt, torments of the preſent, and tremendous apprehenſions of the future—in the returns of rationality, mitigated

gated only by temporary diftraction—in all the agonies of waking confcioufnefs, or in the no lefs terrific vifions of haunted flumber; fo when the minifters of heavenly juftice had fulfilled the fterner part of their commiffion, and the heart of this modern Pharaoh was no longer hardened, but melted to the degree of ductility that is neceffary to fave the foul alive—then thofe minifters, like fpirits of mercy, wore to his eye a lefs vindictive form, breathed into his ear lefs defpairing founds, and on the wounds that yet lacerated his bofom, diftilled fome drops of celeftial balm.

The knowledge of Jane Atwood having been already his vifitor, had been with-held from him only by the tender Caroline, who feared, from his extreme diftrefs on the mention of her name though fo frequently repeated by himfelf, her prefence might prove too much for him to bear. At his reiterated and earneft entreaty, however, as well to his fon and daughter, as to Jonathan, Jerom, and to True George, the latter haftened to the caftle for his beloved.

loved. Jane Atwood ſoon made her appearance before Sir Guiſe Stuart, who had deſired to ſee her alone.—On her entrance he ſhook violently. After gazing on her earneſtly for ſome time, his eyes cloſed in a ſhudder of his whole frame—amidſt the ſhock of which, out-ſtretching his arm, and pointing to heaven, he confuſedly uttered the words—"Injured being, forgive—forgive—and pray for me there!"

He remained in that poſition ſome moments, when recovering viſion, and obſerving Jane kneeling at his bed-ſide, complying with his requeſt by fervent prayers, in which ſhe was joined by all preſent, he ſignified by a movement of his lips, and placing his hand on his breaſt, a faint ſmile atteſting the action, that he was much comforted.

He then deſired his children might be ſummoned: and being told they were both in the room, he turned his view to the other ſide of the bed, and there ſaw them engaged in the ſame interceſſion. Arthur and his Indian united their ſupplications.

Alarmed

Alarmed by the tidings of George, Olivia, Johanna, and Colonel Fitzorton had followed Jane; they ſeated themſelves awhile in the ante-chamber, and then entered the apartment. Every eye and hand was upraiſed to the throne of the Merciful; Sir Guiſe, after many vain efforts to lift his hands to the ſuppliant poſture in which he ſaw theirs, deſired Caroline and Charles to raiſe them; at length uſing all the force which parting life allowed, the dying man, amidſt almoſt whiſpered ſighs, uttered the words—"Receive, O God, the ſoul of a penitent!"—and expired.

A ſilence of the moſt ſolemn kind, notwithſtanding the ſtrong and diſtinct intereſt in which the event was felt by almoſt every ſpectator, diſtinguiſhed this ſcene; even till Sir Guiſe had pronounced the ſentence that terminated his exiſtence: and then, as if by an unanimous feeling, that ſentence, expreſſive at once of the prayer of the dead, and the pardon of the living, was repeated by every one preſent.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE SURVIVORS.

THE preſence of mind which Caroline diſplayed in the foregoing ſcene, exhibited alſo that rich trait in her character, which has emboldened us to believe ſhe may ſafely be propoſed as an example to her ſex, in whatever tria's they may be called upon to undergo in the exerciſe of filial virtue. But to the diſcharge of this laſt duty ſhe was ſummoned, in a moment of the utmoſt ſeverity; her boſom laboured with a ſenſe of the ſtrongeſt evils that could perhaps be inflicted on humanity,—loſs of the only being who had ever touched her heart, reflections on his ſuppoſed tremendous fate, the terrors ſhe felt for her brother's forfeited life, and the death of her father.—The expiring moments of Sir Guiſe, it is true, leſs

lefs touched the heart than thofe of his blamelefs wife; yet, perhaps, the circumftances of a wicked life terminating in a penitent death, has fomething more awful in it to the foul, even than the departure of an innocent being. The feveral fpectators feemed to be fenfible of this. The tutored Indian's earneft prayers for himfelf, unmixed with thofe which he offered up after the deceafe of Sir Guife, were prayers that he might not be guilty of wicked deeds. True George found it neceffary, with the affiftance of Jerom and Jonathan, to convey Jane Atwood to the caftle; and at length Arthur and the Lieutenant conducted Caroline in folemn filence to her apartment, where Burton and the phyficians who had attended Sir Guife, requefted fhe might be left wholly to herfelf: a requeft which, from obfervations they had made, was particularly enforced, and in which, with all the ftrength that refted with her, fhe earneftly joined; affuring, however, her brother as he left the room,

but

but ſtill in a fearful whiſper, that the only wiſh ſhe now had in the world was, to ſee him out of danger. "Then ſhe ſtill labours with that cruel apprehenſion," ſaid Charles, following the apothecary and phyſician to the chamber door. "What apprehenſion?" queſtioned the phyſician. "Tell it below ſtairs," ſaid the apothecary drawing the Lieutenant out, and gently cloſing the door.

Meantime reports were made at the caſtle of the laſt moments of Sir Guiſe Stuart, by True George, to the infinite confuſion of John Fitzorton, whoſe project to move away the abbey family, was now neceſſarily to experience another perilous delay, if not to be wholly deſtroyed. He felt the indecency of hurrying away the children from the remains of their late father, while they were yet at the abbey. For ſome days paſt alſo, Mrs. Fitzorton had been indiſpoſed; Johanna and Jane Atwood were, of courſe, confined by their attendance at the caſtle, and now, again, the ſituation in which Jane herſelf was brought home, alike prevented either

either from the accuſtomed diviſion of their cares at the abbey.

All this delay, however, increaſed the alarm, and confirmed the heart-conſuming image that had haunted, and which now returned to the bleeding memory of Caroline; and her pious tears fell in mingled ſtreams, for the death of her father, and the murder of Henry; and her equal prayers were offered up for the ſouls of both. "May the long repentance of one," exclaimed ſhe, "fit his altered ſpirit for the bleſſed ſociety of the other! and may it be forgotten in the friendſhip of heaven, there had been any cauſe for enmity on earth!"

But whatever be the ſtretch of our minds, our frames can endure but to a certain point; what that point is, can ſcarcely be known to ourſelves, till by many a trial ſuſtained *beyond* what it was imagined we could bear, we feel that neither mind nor body can ſupport more. The unfortunate Caroline had now gained that point, and ſhe fell into a ſtate at once bleſſed and af-

flictive from its infenfibility. The intervals of fenfe were fo tranfient, that no foothing idea could be received or fafely communicated touching the great objects of her momentary thought. She rambled in wild abruptnefs from one point of calamity to another; connected and confufed her ideas; feparated and mixed circumftances, almoft in the fame inftant! She combined the different deftinies of Henry and Sir Guife, then ftretched out her arms to preferve her brother. She faw, in the troubled region of her fancy, all the forms of death, and beheld the vifionary coffins and graves of them all! But this forlorn fituation yielded, and was fucceeded by a lefs troublous condition; and the ever-active Burton applied with happy effect thofe oblivious lenitives which alleviate nature in her extremity.

In the mean time the Lieutenant, accompanied by his friends, paid the laft offices to his unhappy father; the Colonel affifted, and Olivia, from whom the knowledge of Caroline's illnefs could not be altogether concealed,

concealed, and who underſtood ſhe was not able to aſſiſt at the funeral, could not be reſtrained from attending her at the abbey, while the ceremony was performing at the chapel-houſe. Indeed, ſhe had long complained of the interdictions which the Colonel had laid on her. She even thought them unkind, and it was almoſt in direct diſobedience to his counſels, which ſhe had uſually thought oracular, that ſhe perſiſted in her deſign to make her ſuffering friend a viſit of condolence. "Shall I continue to abſent myſelf at ſuch a time as this?" ſhe argued! "If my proffered love for her had ever a motive to ſhew itſelf, it is now, my dear brother! and what has been my motive of forbearance, hour after hour, day after day? a ſlight indiſpoſition, in which I have ſuffered more from ſympathy reſtrained, than any other cauſe. Vain and unfeeling apology! and now too, when ſhe will ſtand more in need of the ſupports of friendſhip, than at any period perhaps of her life."

In truth, John had not a good plea left, which he could discover, and was therefore condemned to add the visit of Olivia to Caroline, to the other innumerable cares and perplexities of the time. No sooner, therefore, had John, Jane Atwood, and True George, departed for the chapel, than Olivia and Johanna, conducted by a servant, repaired to the abbey. To prevent the tumult of publick curiosity and clamour, as well as to conceal the transaction as much as possible from Caroline, the body of Sir Guise Stuart was conveyed to the place of sepulture, through the passage under ground. For, although every kind of rumour had gone forth, the one, from its inconsistence, destructive of the other; and although in the absence of Henry, or rather since his discovery of the mysteries, there no longer subsisted any reason for the concealment of the transactions at the abbey, yet the Lieutenant thought it best, for his sister's sake, to have every thing carried on in the most private manner. And thus Olivia and her friend Johanna avoided the

sight

ſight of the burial preparations, but encountered neverthelefs an unuſual number of the villagers, whom vague reports and half-explained whiſpers of the thickening myſteries of the haunted abbey, and the rumoured death of the pretended quaker, had diſtributed up and down the different walks, applying to one another with a fearful kind of eagerneſs for information.

Olivia however attributed all this to the ſingle event of Sir Guiſe's death, not ſuppoſing but that the myſtick aſſumption either of names or perſons had been removed, or at leaſt left unguarded, for ſome time before the Baronet's death. The wandering, and indeed wondering groupes, therefore, were little noticed, and ſhe entered the abbey by the grand avenue.

They found Caroline aſleep;—according to the ſacred phraſe, ſhe was ſleeping from ſorrow: the daughters of the apothecary, and both the female ſervants, attended her. Olivia and Johannna placed themſelves on each ſide of the bed, and the attendants were juſt beginning a whiſpered account of

their lady's alarming ſituation when ſhe ſtarted in her ſlumber and awoke. To break the ſurpriſe of their too ſudden appearance, Johanna and Olivia ſhaded themſelves a moment behind the curtains: but a little ruſtling occaſioned by this, induced Caroline to throw back the obſtructions, and ſhe diſcovered her viſitors. It would ſcarce have been poſſible to give any two perſons a more afflicting appearance than theſe good and gentle beings now wore to the terrified eye of Caroline Stuart. From motives of genuine reſpect and good will, Olivia had put on a mourning dreſs the inſtant ſhe heard of the Baronet's deceaſe, and had worn it ever ſince; and from a motive yet more powerful—an attachment to the Lieutenant's family—Johanna had, alſo, aſſumed the deepeſt ſables. The unhappy Caroline looked on this as ſo unequivocal a confirmation of Henry's being dead, that ſhe ſprung up in her bed, and claſping her hands, implored Olivia to forgive the deed. "What deed, my ſweet friend, oh! conſole yourſelf I beſeech you. Your Jo-

hanna

hanna and I are come to intreat, that when you find yourſelf able you would paſs a little time with us at the caſtle." "Ye are ſpirits of pity then," ſighed Caroline, "who are permitted to come in that ſolemn form to ſhew us mercy; but, alas! the caſtle!— "No!" whiſpered ſhe to Olivia, "that is not the place for us; the widowed dove had beſt come to the abbey; there ſhe ſhall find ſuccour; theſe poor arms ſhall be her refuge—fly—fly thou bereaved bird—haſte—haſte to thy neſt. Yes, yes,—now, now, thou art ſafe."

With wild yet tender eagerneſs ſhe clung to Mrs. Fitzorton as ſhe ſpoke, and folded her paſſionately yet fearfully in her arms. "Yet, no," continued ſhe quitting, and abruptly receding from Olivia: "the abbey too is rifled, my poor, poor father! he too is gone; nothing left here but ſorrow: but there is a place ſtill where we ſhall find both the truants, and all of us be happy—yonder, yonder, yonder."

She drew Mrs. Fitzorton again towards her with one hand, and with the other

 pointed

pointed to heaven. At once incongruous, and conſiſtent, ſhe proceeded in this manner for ſome time, then ſunk on the pillow. "Alas!" ſaid Olivia, "her ſenſes are unſettled, my Johanna; the loſs of her father, at ſuch a period, when ſhe might have hoped ſo much happineſs from his life reformed." "That, my lady," interpoſed the apothecary's daughter, Sally, who was ſtill with her, "is one cauſe of her preſent unhappineſs; but there is another: ſhe has taken into her imagination the ſtrangeſt fancy—" "Hark! Sally," exclaimed the other daughter, "did you not hear a great noiſe?"

Olivia and Johanna were trying to recover, or rather watching the recovery of Caroline, who had fallen into a ſwoon, and they ſeemed to have no ear or eye for any other object. "No, Sally, I heard nothing," anſwered the other daughter. "There, again!" cried Sally.

"Yes, I heard it then." "Good God! what a ſhriek!" ſaid one of the female attendants. "Is there any body below?"

queſtioned

queſtioned Johanna, then firſt hearing the noiſe.

"Only my fellow-ſervant, who is gone down to the old cook for candles: we ſhould have fetched them before but that the moon ſhone ſo bright, and my lady always bids us let ſome of the moon-light come into her chamber, eſpecially ſince ſhe has been ill; though I always think it is not good for any body, as the moon is but a melancholy companion unleſs a perſon is very happy; and then it's worth all the lights." "Huſh, I ſurely heard a foot-ſtep," ſaid Johanna. "O, it is nothing but the dog, Miſs, little old Fitz; ſee there is his ſhadow on the wall, he is coming round to his carpet. "All is ſtill now," ſaid the remaining attendant; I will venture to go down. But if one of the ſtrange ſights and ſounds ſhould be going about"—ſtepping back. "What can that be at one of the windows? this which is left open neareſt the bed," aſked Johanna with ſome emotion.

Every one but Olivia obſerved the ob-

ject. It was palpably that of a figure looking into the room, from the other ſide of the window—a human face was viſibly preſſing the glaſs—and after examining the objects in the chamber, for ſome time, part of another figure was ſeen at the farther end of the ſame window—the only one not ſhut to—and then every ray of light from the moon was in a moment extinguiſhed. "Heaven!" exclaimed Olivia, turning from Caroline, "What, my dear Johanna, can thus darken the room all of a ſudden? I can no longer ſee a feature of Caroline's face, and, methought, her colour was juſt returning." The whole company were too much terrified to reply.

"The ſervant is now coming with a candle," ſaid Johanna, "all will be well—do not ſeem alarmed—we ſhall diſturb Caroline." The door of the ante-chamber was left half open, and a light, from the oppoſite ſide, gleamed from it; but the light did not advance, and the door being ſuddenly drawn to, almoſt ſhut out of the chamber the faint ſparks which had appeared.

peared. A whiſpering of different voices enſued—the voices ſtopped—the door of the ante-chamber again half opened, and a figure, folded up in a tattered dreſs, came gliding into the room, with a light that flung a ghaſtly hue on the countenance of the perſon who bore it, and on the ſurrounding objects, as from a candle burning in the ſocket. With ſtealing ſteps the figure paced round the chamber, examining in its way every part of the furniture—then walked to the head of the bed, holding up the flaring light to every countenance—it then went back with like care, but with more precipitation; and had ſcarce regained the ante-chamber before the light went out. Olivia, with great ſtrength of mind, had enjoined the attendants to ſilence on the firſt appearance of alarm; obſerving, that the life as well as the reaſon of Caroline depended on it; and partly from love—partly from fear—they had hitherto obeyed.

In the midſt of this total darkneſs, more diſtinct ſounds, and particularly what follows, aſſailed their ears:—"Now, now—

or never. Our principal mark is in bed faft afleep."

This changed the terrors which had before been excited on the old notion of the abbey being haunted by evil fpirits, into a no lefs dread of its being infefted by robbers. The words which, after a fhort paufe fucceeded, appeared to put this opinion beyond a doubt: "The window which was open is covered, and all are fecured below —I tell you the reft are gone to the chapel. We have brought round two of the horfes into the foreft within a few fteps of the lane that goes round to the road. We can wrap the woman in the blankets, and then the way is all clear before us. What a plague are you afraid of then? Here are the other gags. If you dally any longer, I I will call up fome of the others." A dreadful filence remained. In the next inftant it was broken by a fudden uproar of confufed founds from below, accompanied by a cry of "Seize, feize the ruffians!—fecure them for juftice—but fhed no blood. A number of fteps were then heard upon the ftairs,

ſtairs, and a murmur of voices was reſumed in the ante-chamber. Preſently ruſhed two perſons from thence into the bed-room, crying to each other "The window—the window!—no way but the window—your curſed delay has ruined all!"

Inſtantly the caſement was forced open, the cloth which had been ſpread over it torn away, and the moon-beams which thence fell on the chamber, diſcovered the ragged figure they had before ſeen, with his companion in like ſhabby habiliments, deſperately attempting to throw themſelves out. One ſucceeded. Three other perſons coming into the room, one of them ran to the window, and telling the ſecond fugitive that death would be the conſequence of the leaſt noiſe, while in that apartment, he was conducted back into the ante-chamber. The other two who had entered, went towards the bed, on or near which every one had remained, in almoſt breathleſs conſternation. "Fear nothing," whiſpered one of the perſons, in accents well calculated to inſpire courage, though there

was now ſo violent a tumult of voices from below ſtairs, the ſoothing ſounds were ſcarcely audible. The perſon, however, who had led off the ſecond culprit, now coming up ſoftly with a light, diſcovered, to the aſtoniſhment of every one preſent, the faces of Partington and Henry Fitzorton, in thoſe who had advanced to the bed, and that of Floreſco in the bearer of the light. So ſuddenly, unexpectedly, momentous, however, and under ſuch peculiar circumſtances, did theſe make their appearance, that it ſeemed but a continuation of the former myſteries—a completion, indeed, of the magick by the entrance of ſome benign Genii, on the departure of evil ſpirits. Every thing above ſtairs, and below, ſtill precluded explanation. Joy, ſorrow, hope, fear, characterized the moment, and diſtinguiſhed it by all theſe blended paſſions, from every other in the lives of either of the parties then in the chamber. Henry and his friends, guided ſurely by Providence, came, like guardian angels, to ſave the wife who was folding him in her arms

—the

—the mother of his children—the betrothed bride of his bofom friend—and Caroline Stuart!—from the horrid machinations of midnight ruffians—the noble-minded, yet humble orphan of a burning foil—one of the beings whom chriftian mafters confider as the beafts of the field—as an article of flavery and of fale, was appointed to become an active inftrument in this prefervation by the power, who in a yet more glorious inftance, even the redemption of the world, cloathed the redeemer with humility.

But to Caroline Stuart, how fhall even this immediate interpofition of heaven be extended?

Neither the tumultuous fcenes from below, nor the fearful founds or fights in her own apartment, had reached her ear or unfolded her eye; nor had fhe, indeed, moved fince fhe fell into fudden fleep. "Alas! it is the fleep of the grave," fighed Olivia, to whom even her hufband was now, from the firft moment of her heart's election, the only fecond object of her attention. Every

 thought

thought and every emotion went to Caroline. "O God! God! ſhe is dead—ſhe is dead!" ejaculated Henry: his accents at once frantic and impaſſioned, although demanded by the occaſion, terrified all preſent. "Ah! no," exclaimed Johanna, "bleſſed be God, not dead, I felt her breath, this inſtant, on my lips." O heavens! I hear it too," ſaid Olivia, "huſh—huſh, my love—do as I have done, Henry—thus—ſoftly—and you may hear it too." Olivia guided the ear of Henry, till it preſſed on Caroline's lips, and after the ſilence of a moment, in which breath ſeemed to have forſaken the liſtening band, "No! no!" groaned Henry, "I hear it not; never ſhall thoſe lips be animated more!" "But an inſtant ago there was life on them," ſaid Johanna: "And ſo there is now—again—again I felt it on mine," cried Olivia. She importuned her huſband to be convinced, and aſſiſting him to place his face towards that of Caroline, in the manner ſhe had done her own, he ſenſibly felt the irregular, but palpable breathing

breathing of her he mourned, on his cheek; and while he yet remained in that pofition, the breath gained a little acceffion of ftrength; and, before he changed his pofture, had acquired the force of a figh.

"Yes, there can be no doubt of it, fhe is alive!" cried Henry, enraptured; withdrawing from the bed and falling on his knees, in gratitude to heaven. Little Florefco followed his example, repeating "Him is alive! him is alive! Negro boy was praying God to take hims own poor felf, and put him in grave, and bring back good fpirit of good lady, to make all good peoples happy—but him is alive!"

In the higheft fervor of thefe extacies of our fable fon of nature, indeed on the firft mention of life remaining in Caroline, Partington had hurried down ftairs, but now returned with Burton, John Fitzorton, the Lieutenant, father Arthur, and feveral others whom he met, in his headlong courfe for affiftance, coming from the chapel.

A new fcene of wonders now opened on the eyes of all the laft comers, except

Partington,

Partington, who encountering his friends near the gates of the caſtle, and ſurrounded by half the villagers of both pariſhes, all in much diſorder, ſpoke only to the apothecary on the one, then moſt alarming, ſubject, Miſs Stuart's illneſs; ſo that to many of them, the Colonel in particular, Partington himſelf, even before they reached the abbey, was an object of amazement; yet on that object which in a manner annihilated the reſt—on Caroline Stuart—every other ſurprize and every other care, while Olivia related the ſtory of the events ſince her arrival with Johanna, which ſhe detailed with afflictive accuracy, became ſubordinate.

The apothecary at the end of the narrative queſtioned his eldeſt daughter, whether ſhe had attended to his orders in giving the draughts regularly, both as to times and proportions? She aſſured him ſhe had adminiſtered them every two hours, not only before he went to the funeral, but for the whole of the preceding day; that none of them produced the compoſure either of

mind

mind or body her father had expected as their result;—for that his patient had not closed her eyes till after every power of speech and of motion was taken from her, by the violent exertions of both, and that the last draught having been offered and accepted about a quarter of an hour before she fell asleep, she had apprehended in her own mind, that it had proved too strong for her weakened faculties; "but I dare not disclose my fears to any one, my dear father," said she, "because, I am sure, let what will come of it, you meant it to do her good."

"No harm can come of it,—and in the end it will do her good, child," answered the apothecary, firmly.—"Its strength has produced on her weakness, it is true, the alarming effects you have noticed, and in a degree far beyond my expectation, owing to the unsettled state of her mind and senses, and the sight of persons and things, which, in that state, every object aggravates; the medicine was intended to act as anodyne, and I had judged a small addition to

to its opiate quality proper to be infufed on this day, left any account of, or reflection upon, the folemn duties affigned to this evening, fhould gain accefs to her too feeling heart; fhe is already in a refufcitating ftate, though, perhaps, to you imperceptible:—but the giving her freer air, and, indeed, wholly withdrawing yourfelves, will be very proper."

Every body retired from the bed, and felt the force of the remark: yet no one feemed willing to be the firft to quit the chamber. They, however, receded towards the door. The apothecary threw back the curtains, and opened one of the windows which had been clofed. "I knew," faid he, "the force of the medicine was almoft fpent; and that the functions of nature were regaining their tone:—See—that faint tinting in the cheek, is a good fymptom.—It might be called by Mr. Henry, the rofe-bud of promifed return to wholefome life:—look,—and that foft dew that you fee on the temples, and which will prefently overfpread the beautiful forehead, fhall nourifh it."—

it."—"O! and thofe fweet eyes, which, praifed be the Almighty, are opening their gentle beams upon us," faid Mrs. Fitzorton, "fhall be as the bleffed Sun to reanimate her heart and to chear ours!" Henry raifed his wife's hand, even to his lips, but infenfibly ftepped nearer to the bed, that he might fee what fhe had defcribed. Indeed, every perfon in the room, on the apothecary's firft remark, had advanced.

The progrefs of recovery from a partial trance, indeed, by means like thefe, is not flow: and the effect of a fuccefsful anodyne is known frequently to produce not only unbroken repofe in fleep, but to beftow on the haraffed body and mind, even in the awaking moments, images and ideas, the very reverfe of thofe irritable and painful phantoms, which made the application neceffary. Sounds and vifions of a lulling, and almoft celeftial kind, follow or accompany the firft movements after the fpell, that for a time locked up every mortal power, is unbound; and the charm acquires fresh

freſh beauty from our conſciouſneſs, when ſenſibility is in a degree reſtored. We ſeem as it were new born, and inhabitants of a more delightful world, with kind oblivions of whatever was unfortunate; and ſweet recollections of whatever has been happy in the paſt. Such appeared to have been the temporary trance, and the ſenſations which ſucceeded it in the mind of Caroline. She ſaw before her eye the forms of all who were moſt dear to her on earth: but they floated as yet before her intellectual viſion as heavenly ſhapes, as ſpirits bleſſed even to the degree ſhe could wiſh them bleſſed. She ſaw Henry and Olivia ſide by ſide, and ſmiled tenderly upon both. She gazed earneſtly at the former, bent forwards as if to gain a juſter point of view, paſſed the back of her hand over her own eyes, as if doubtful of their ſight: and then, but with timid advances, extended her arm towards Henry, and, at length, touching his ſhoulder, ſhe drew back as if aſtoniſhed to find him embodied; trembling a moment, ſhe again put forth her arm,

and

and reaching the hand of Henry, gave it to Olivia. "There, dearest brother," said she, with a faint but satisfied tone, "thank heaven!"

Such of the company as knew not the circumstance of her fatal misconception of the Lieutenant's words, in which number were Olivia and Henry, looked upon this as the remains of her delirium; and those who were in the secret of its import, did not judge the present by any means the proper moment to unfold particulars. John and Burton, having conferred a moment, the latter renewed his request that the society would separate. "I will agree to this," said Olivia, "if I can obtain dear Caroline's promise." — "No promises, sister, cried the Colonel, "can be asked or granted at present! two importunate messages have already been brought up by the impatient Partington, who had again occasion to leave us for another party." John now assisted the apothecary and the Lieutenant, gently to enforce obedience: and though, as Caroline's fuller sense returned,

and objects and circumftances affumed more and more their real fize and pofition, fhe was nearer rationality, and in her peculiar cafe, alas! farther from felicity—the dire paroxyfms were at an end, and expanding her wide-fpread arms in token of unfpeakable gratitude for the mafs of heart-felt attentions beftowed on her, fhe faw all her friends, except the apothecary and his daughters, quit the room without feeming to prefs at that moment their longer ftay. Her eyes, however, infenfibly fettled on Henry and Olivia till they could be no more feen. But fcarcely were this amiable pair out of fight, even while the apothecary had required an audience with his daughters in the ante-chamber, than the female attendant who remained with Caroline, perhaps with imprudent, though well-meant zeal, took occafion to inform her, in a loofe and defultory way of the peril they had all been in, even of their lives; and that in Henry Fitzorton, Caroline and all her friends had found a deliverer. To this officious information Caroline made no

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anſwer in words, but ſhe looked the language which no words have ever yet conveyed to the ears of mortal man, in the utmoſt felicity of eloquence.

It is from a conſciouſneſs of the inadequacy of words, indeed, to deſcribe emotions of a particular kind, that we have forborne to attempt delineating the feelings of Henry in the above ſcene: ſhould there be any readers, we aſſure ourſelves there can be very few, who imagine that thoſe feelings were derogatory to the character of a huſband, a father or a friend, even in that hour of trial, will neither do him juſtice, nor reflect honour on their own hearts.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### GYPSIES.

BUT ſurpriſes of a very different nature have been waiting our leiſure below ſtairs: and which muſt needs have excited ſome

degree of curiofity in the reader's mind, now it can be drawn from more interefting objects. The woods of Fitzorton, and the abbey foreft, had been, time immemorial, the fummer refort of a tribe of the Egyptian wanderers; and although Sir Armine did not abfolutely encourage thofe who attached themfelves to the environs of the caftle, he fuffered them to erect their local habitations in the neighbourhood of his manfion; would indirectly contribute a faggot to their fire, and a joint of meat to their pot, to reprefs, and, if poffible, reform their pilfering habits: Olivia and Henry were more avowedly their patrons—the one would not feldom make up a little bundle of comfortables for their hedge-born children, and fometimes allow them to infpect her lovely hands to read the lines of life; while the other would alfo, in his early days, confult them on the fubject of his more difficult deftiny, and amongft other romantick plans had once ferious thoughts of joining the train as well to favour his love,

love, as to eſcape that interruption to which his rambles around the abbey domain ſo often expoſed him. But True George was the chief protector of the ſable band which eſtabliſhed themſelves in the Fitzorton diſtrict; for there were two parties, the one calling themſelves the Caſtle, and the other the Abbey Gypſies: and what is not a little curious, they were as much in hoſtility with one another as the two houſes to which they conſidered themſelves as appropriate. Had Henry put his project of the moment in execution, he would have certainly attached himſelf to the tribe of the abbey, not only from its proximity to the ſacred chamber of the inalienable ſubduer of his heart, but becauſe the hoſtile parties in all their treaties of peace, or ſuſpenſions of arms, preſcribed a line of demarcation which the caſtle gypſies could not paſs without an immediate renewal of war; yet Henry had been always on good terms with both parties, and ſo of courſe had True George. The ſervants of both houſes would alternately reſort to the different tribes to have

their fortunes told; although they seemed in general to give their own oracles the preference. Since Sir Armine's death, however, the castle prophets, though patronized for a time by Olivia, were routed by John Fizorton, and even Henry yielded to his motive. "Depend upon it, my dear brother," said he, "some of these days these yellow *protegees* of yours will be divulging more than is agreeable: and although we affect incredulity, when an idea which self-love or a faithful heart declares impossible, is poured into our ears, it is the corner-stone sometimes of a fatal edifice, which jealousy can find materials to complete even to the destruction of the peace of innocence—I am determined to rid the country of them, at least our party, and have no objection to being called cruel on the business." When Henry and Olivia were abroad, John kept his word in the very next summer, but passed them over to Partington, and not without a *douceur* to reconcile them to the change: and they soon thought themselves gainers by the

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transfer, for the merry-humours of the Squire were much relifhed: his civility to the worthlefs, and his abufe of the worthy, was foon underftood, and his bounty being ever proportioned to defert in every ftation of life, he bowed and abufed them into fomething like principles, at leaft rendered them a lefs criminal race of people, and many of them were not only penfioners on his poor-rafcal-warehoufe, but he would fometimes buy up the half-worn dreffes of his poor, but good neighbours during the winter, or exchange them for new articles of the fame kind, on purpofe to lay in a ftock for his gypfey vagabonds againft their fummer return to the Bury woodlands, by the fides or in which, he had erected an occafional hut to mark any difcovery he had made of a worthy trait of heart or character in any of thefe wanderers; the nature of the action was written over the door of the building, and a key prefented to the party for whofe ufe it was intended, by way of encouragement. It muft at the

the ſame time be confeſſed, that to ſtand as a monument of any detected baſeneſs, he would order his carpenter to run up here and there a gallows, neareſt to the place where the foul deed was committed, and if the offending party had the hardineſs to return, or was allowed another trial, a rope was thruſt into her or his hand, with a label worked into the nooſe, holding out the threatning word—Beware!

With theſe Henry Fitzorton, on his ſecond forced march to Partington's, renewed his acquaintance. They had juſt then reſumed their leafy retreats for the ſeaſon. On the evening of his arrival at the Bury, the leader of them, with impatient earneſtneſs, ſolicited the honour of an audience: this being granted, Henry went up into what was always called by the maſter of the manſion, Poet's dormitory;—ſacred to the lawyer and philoſopher of the Fitzorton family there were other apartments—when the ſubſequent converſation paſt betwixt Henry and the perſon who followed him up ſtairs.

"I am

"I am now one of the fathers and chiefs of the tribe, an pleaſe your honour, who for ſo many years enjoyed the protection of good Sir Armine and his family: I lived in and beſide Fitzorton woods and hedge-rows the beſt part of my long life, and have been the better for it ever ſince: your honour, and Madam Olivia, and Squire Clare, all uſed to pay me and mine a viſit, and I love Sir John that now is,—though he ſent us away from our old houſehold trees, as his good father uſed to call them."

"I remember you, my honeſt fellow," ſaid Henry—"I remember you came from the abbey-party to our's, becauſe"——

"Becauſe," interrupted the gypſey, "I could not bear to be ſheltered by the leaves, or fed by the ſtolen offals of Sir Guiſe Stuart, after the good father Arthur had put us in the right way—and after I ſaw and heard what the wicked Baronet was doing againſt his lady and children. And our patron, the Squire, of late years can hardly find words bad enough to throw at me when he is loading me with good things."

"And what have you at the end of this preface to impart?" aſked Henry.

"I have to beſeech your honour to read what is contained in theſe papers immediately," anſwered the gypſey, "and to take ſuch ſteps as you may judge proper thereupon; I was juſt going to ſend to our Squire for a paſs to Fitzorton caſtle, to deliver them to you or Sir John, when I heard you were come back to the Bury. Here they are, ſir. I have nothing to ſay more, but to deſire you will beware of gypſies, but not to think ill of Blondel Gapper, your humble ſervant, though he is one of them."

Gapper, of whoſe fidelity True George had often made fair report, and of whoſe kindneſs Henry himſelf had received teſtimony, now took his leave, and Henry ſat down to the peruſal of the myſterious papers. They were of a nature to call out his utmoſt aſtoniſhment and apprehenſion. He judged it expedient to make Partington a partaker of the confidence, but it was with very great difficulty he could be prevented from

from returning home before the Squire had difcovered the caufe of his impatience: the inftant, however, it was difcovered, he concurred not only in thinking the impatience warranted, but contributed all his own impetuous powers could fupply to give it new force. "We muft be off again directly," faid Partington to Mrs. Herbert—"I muft leave thefe young villains"—meaning Carry and little John, "in your care, Mrs. Worthlefs, until we come to you again, or fend for you to Fitz-orton."

Vehement as were the agitations of Henry, they were lefs violent than thofe of Partington on this occafion: though both were fo bufied, hand, foot, and voice—now in the manfion, now in the ftable, now in the outhoufes, driving every fervant before them, and affifting to collect every weapon of attack and defence upon the premifes, from the fire-arms in the life-and-death-room, as the Squire had baptifed it, to the fpades and mattocks in the garden-houfe, and crouding them all in Henry's

own coach, which ſtill remained, and into all the carriages of the Bury, that a ſpectator not in their ſecret would either have deemed them both ſeized with ſudden madneſs, or that they were arming to defend an invaded country. Even the ſervants, albeit in the practice of flying at the word of command, and inured to extraordinary expeditions, had never ſeen their Squire in ſuch a fury of preparation before. One of them was diſpatched to the gypſey chief, to attend at the Bury that moment with the witneſs he mentioned; and when they appeared to the ſummons, Partington abuſed them as if they were two of the plagues of Egypt, kiſſed their diſcoloured hands with more devotion than he would have done thoſe of Cleopatra, the queen of their country, and gave Blondel the command of one of the armed chariots, ordered him to ſhut up the perſon who was one of his tribe in the ſame vehicle, and then follow the lead. Mrs. Herbert alone was made, in part, confidential; and her conduct thereupon ſo gratified the Squire, that he

regretted

regretted the young knaves, Henry's children, muſt have a ſhe-thing to ſuperintend them, ſince he was ſure, from the manner in which that huſſey, mother Herbert, had put a blunderbuſs, and one of the broadſwords into the carriage, ſhe would ſlice off an honeſt gentleman's head as neatly as any of thoſe old tygreſſes, Boadicea, Zenobia, or Joan of Arc.

In this manner did they return to Fitzorton, taking up the turnpike-man by the way. They found the caſtle almoſt emptied of its inhabitants. One of the few ſervants, however, who remained at home, told them the family were gone to the burial of Sir Guiſe Stuart; they therefore continued their route directly to the abbey, for whoſe late poſſeſſor the chapel bell ſtruck on their ear as they were paſſing, but their eyes were yet more forcibly impreſſed by a ſight of thoſe villagers whom Olivia and Johanna had ſeen ſcattered about, but who had diſperſed until recalled in greater multitudes by the few who dared to penetrate ſo far as the chapel, into which they pro-

tested they had seen enter a coffin, which several present had assured them, contained the dead body of Sir Guise Stuart, and that they moreover beheld his son, the Lieutenant, and Sir John Fitzorton, True George, and many others whom they knew, walking, all alive, as mourners behind, and good father Arthur the popish priest, before it, with a book in one hand, and a light in the other.

This relation, which was regarded as at the top of all the miraculous things that had over-shadowed the abbey, the forest, and the whole parish, re-assembled them; until encouraged by each other, they resolved to see whether the whole was visionary or real: for although the majority determined in favour of the popular superstition, the credit given to some of those who made their reports from the chapel-house, amongst whom was the landlord of the Fitzorton arms, who received his intelligence from the young sexton, no inconsiderable number were of opinion they had all along been deluded by their fears, as to the objects they had

had themſelves ſeen, or thought they ſaw. A large body of the ruſtics, therefore, were ſpirited up by the power of numbers, though one amongſt them, with ſome tremor, remarked, that a ſingle ghoſt would put to the route a whole army, though it were but the ghoſt of a ſucking child; and they took courage to move even to the abbey door, which they reached in the very moment that a violent ſhriek, which was followed, by cries of murder, were heard by the party within. The blood of thoſe who were gathered together without, curdled at the ſound: yet terrifying as it was, the ſhriek was too palpably human, and female, for any that wore the forms of men to fly from: their apprehenſions for themſelves were abſorbed in that great principle of nature, which at once diſtinguiſhes and protects humanity: inſtead of receding they puſhed onward, and finding the inner doors faſtened, they were in the act of burſting them open, when Partington and his cavalcade, with Henry Fitzorton, arrived.

"Aſſiſt, aſſiſt us, my friends!' exclaimed Henry, with a voice almoſt of madneſs,— "Aſſiſt us in the prevention of dreadful horrors—of inhuman murders! now, even now, committing within that houſe!" In a moment the furious attack was made by the multitude, led on by Henry and Partington, and the abbey was filled with the defenders of innocence! A gang of infamous ruffians were thus, in an inſtant, detected and ſecured. It was, at once, the criſis both of danger and of delivery. To reach that criſis, had been the wily labour of conſpiring villany for many months; but to render the conſpiracy abortive, and involve the conſpirators, even in their own ſnare, was the atchievement only of a few minutes. Such is the toil by which human machinations are conducted, and ſuch the facility with which the hand of Providence reveals and overthrows them.

As Henry led his wife and Johanna down ſtairs, Partington was diſcovered at the head of his myrmidons, ſtanding over their bound captives; but the conquerors were ſo-

ſo numerous, that nothing could be ſeen but themſelves. At the ſight, however, of the reſcued Olivia, and her friends, the victors ſent forth an univerſal ſhout of triumph. This gave John an opportunity to thank them for their zeal, but to obſerve, at the ſame time, that much of its good effect would be counteracted if they ſuffered even their exultation at preſent to diſturb Miſs Caroline Stuart, whom they had helped to defend, intimating, that ſhe was under many alarms already, and not in a ſtate to hear them accounted for. The very name of Caroline Stuart, combined with ill health, but yet ſoothing them into the certainty of her being alive and once more at the abbey—that Caroline, whom they had ſo often found a mediator, and a friend, to the utmoſt extent of her humble power—ſilenced them like the operation of ſome ſudden charm, and they uttered their honeſt wiſhes and thankſgivings only in whiſpers. Henry had, in the meanwhile, on a hint from the Colonel, placed Olivia and Johanna in his own coach, which had

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ſo recently arrived, from the Bury, obſerving to his wife, that Partington and John would take care of the banditti whom they had happily diſcovered, and " it is no time for you, my love," ſaid he, ordering the coachman to drive home,—" to hear the particulars of a neſt of ruffians."—" Nor do I wiſh it," anſwered ſhe; " a thouſand thanks for hurrying us away from their ſight," anſwered Olivia; " no doubt, my Henry, but they will turn out very wicked people, ſince they ſeemed to watch a time when they might ſecurely terrify, and, perhaps, plunder a ſet of defenceleſs women; and when they knew their defenders were, in general, engaged in the moſt holy offices. But, O! how providential your return, my deareſt Henry! what an interpoſition!" " How was it brought about?" requeſted Johanna. " And where is my Mrs. Herbert?" " and our children?" demanded Olivia.

Henry whom a forced marriage—in ſpite of the value of the object—an enthralled ſituation before, had involved in eternal re-

ſervations, managements, and difficulties, was puzzling and hacking at a reply, when Olivia, miſconceiving the cauſe of his heſitation, exclaimed—"Good heaven! ſurely the alarm did not extend to Mr. Partington's! I hope all is quiet and well at the Bury."—"Perhaps the dear children and Mrs. Herbert were your fellow-travellers?" ſaid Johanna. "Perhaps they were ſet down at the caſtle?"

Henry now found it became neceſſary to ſay ſomething; and yet finding it both impolitick and improper to ſpeak to the whole of the machinations which were the ſubject of the dreadful papers delivered to him by the gypſey chief, he affectionately ſoothed the fears of his wife, by an aſſurance that both their children were well and happy—that Partington had deputed Mrs. Herbert and little Caroline to be his houſekeepers, and little John the repreſentative of the Squire himſelf, till he ſhould return to the Bury; and that in ſhort, having very ſuddenly received intelligence of a foul conſpiracy formed by a party of gypſeys, who

had annoyed the neighbourhood of the caſtle and of the abbey for ſome time, and were carrying their depredations to the moſt daring lengths, as ſhe muſt have heard; it appeared neceſſary to Partington, as well as to himſelf, to ſet out with the utmoſt expedition to prevent, if poſſible, the complete miſchief.

After numberleſs thanks for her huſband's goodneſs, and many apologies for her own impatience; —— "I know not how it is," ſaid Mrs. Fitzorton to Johanna;—"but I find it impoſſible to be happy, or even as contented as I ought, when my huſband or either of my children are abſent; and, I fear, I am unreaſonable enough to wiſh, that whether they were in proſperity or in perils I might always have them in my view, or eaſily within my reach, even till death ſhould ſhut them from my mental ſight." She almoſt whiſpered this to Johanna, but Henry heard—"And henceforward," ſaid he, forcibly, "that wiſh ſhall be gratified! I here pledge myſelf before this fair witneſs, that when

our

our children return to us, nothing but that dreadful ſummons — which heaven keep many ſmiling years from my Olivia!—ſhall again divide us from the ſociety of each other; nor will I henceforth accept a viſit, or take an excurſion of any kind, from which Olivia ſhall be excluded."—"Could I have believed," anſwered Olivia, "that one of the moſt terrifying nights, and which threatened to be even fatal, ſhould prove one of the moſt bleſſed of my happy life!"

Her full heart could not utter more: the reſt was the expreſſive ſilence of felicity.

Nor had Henry in his expreſſion gone farther than the truth. He now wiſhed beyond every other good to continue the awe-ful duties of huſband and of father; and that thoſe might be unbroken, he thought that her guardian eye, and protecting preſence, would even counteract whatever future events might happen. Hence he embraced Olivia's idea of a family union, which might keep them all together, even on the night that he had ſeen

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the only object in the whole world which could render the plan difficult to be realized—an object which he had ſeen in a ſituation every way more affecting than at any former period of a long and eventful intercourſe. That ſituation had, however, loſt none of its intereſt, but he concealed the emotions which he could not conquer: he even ſtruggled with them enough to amuſe Olivia and Johanna the reſt of their way to the caſtle, with an account of Partington's loading every thing and every body with fire and ſword for the expedition.

Perhaps, under the veil of night ſome tears were ſhed, and the roll of the coach might ſink the ſound of ſome heart-ſick ſighs, which mixed with, or followed the narration: but, ſurely, it is not conſiſtent with the juſtice or the compaſſion either of earth or of heaven to rebuke him for theſe.

## CHAPTER XX.

### CULPRITS.

JOHN Fitzorton, Partington, father Arthur, the Lieutenant, True George, and Florefco, were all this while bufily employed in the abbey. The firft, in his magifterial capacity, exhorted the ftill cluftering but now only murmuring multitude, to affift in conveying the culprits, whom Partington had caufed to be manacled hand and foot, to fome place at a greater diftance from the apartments of the fick Caroline. True George feconded this motion; but, as an amendment, propofed they fhould be carried to a fnug place he knew of in the out-buildings, which Dennifon had formerly told him was the abbey dungeon.—" I know it well," faid Arthur. " It will only be neceffary," rejoined John, to put them there for the night, as other meafures

meaſures muſt be taken with them in the morning: away with them therefore."

The word of command found ſuch ready obedience, that had the captives been pigs of lead they would have been moved off like ſo many pounds of feathers. Indeed, Partington himſelf, his own friends, and the Bury gypſey, ſeemed to feel the force, and do the work of angry elephants. The criminals were lifted over the impediments which ruinous time had thrown in their way, the maſſy ſtones, fallen ſtatues, and half-perfect towers—until they reached the ſpot recommended by True George, who bore one of the ringleaders on his ſhoulders. It was, indeed, a place of dreadful ſecurity, and fit only for criminals of the moſt heinous kind. It ſtood in the extreme angle of that part of the uninhabited buildings, near which the unfortunate Sir Guiſe took refuge from the preſumed violence of his ſon: no door covered the abhorrent mouth that gaped for the reception of its prey: it was ſcooped in the form of a well, into which there was no way of aſcent or deſcent but

by

by means of a ladder, which not even a climbing animal could hope to aſcend, ſo abſolute was the perpendicular, and had little hold for the feet—So had it been repreſented by True George, who had, however, the curioſity and enterpriſe to explore it with a candle and lantern when a boy. The Lieutenant, nevertheleſs, ſaid, and in which he was joined by both Jerom, and Jonathan, he had ſeen on one of the nights of his own watch, the figure of a man come out of that place, and had even purſued him; but another perſon coming up from the cave, cloſe upon him, extinguiſhed the light, and effected an eſcape." "I am glad of it," ſaid Partington, "as the gentry know this way the better if they have been there before; ſo what ſay you to our throwing the worthy perſonages in juſt as they are—they are exactly truſſed for the occaſion—and you ſee there is no ladder now at hand?"

The mob were delighted with this propoſal, and would have aſſiſted its execution, without conſideration of conſequences, had not

not John Fitzorton and Arthur reprefented the danger and the impropriety of fuch a proceeding; Partington, however, had taken out the gag from the mouth of the perfon he himfelf was helping to carry, " to know whether he wifhed to be complimented with the firft tofs?" making his ufual bow as he afked the queftion. The anfwer however, to which was, " that he had rather be thrown into hell-fire than go again into that place." " Again! what you have been in it before, have you then?" faid Partington.

It is impoffible to exprefs the mute horror that fat, indeed, on the countenances of moft of the other culprits as they approached the abyfs. " O, any where but there! under or above ground—you know not its terrors!" faid the wretch whofe tongue was untied. " Nay, then, there are good reafons which we are ftill unacquainted with," faid Partington, " why this of all others, fhould be the place: in—in—in—with them, my friends." At this inftant Jonathan and Jerom came running

ning with a ladder which they had gone unbidden to fetch, and in defpight of ftruggles, fupplications, &c. &c. the overpowering multitude forced them down; True George afferted, on his own knowledge, there was but the way they went in to get out, and that he propofed to guard, fword in hand, until the morning. "And ickle Florrey fhall guard too, and the firft bad mens fhall die that tries to come up till good mens give leave." This propofal was accepted: the whole gang, therefore, were compelled to defcend one by one, or receive the ftroke, which Partington fwore fhould fever their amiable heads from their fhoulders the moment they refufed. Yet after all, the matter was effected by every violent meafure but the one threatened. Several of the village mob were earneft for leave to keep Florefco and True George company, efpecially the turnpike-man, but on the Colonel making it a particular requeft they would return home for the fake of Mrs. Fitzorton and Mifs Stuart, and not intermeddle with the affair until he had

made farther enquiry, and he had entered into a private examination of the prifoners —they refpectfully complied with his wifhes. Soon after the Lieutenant, with Burton and Arthur went back to the abbey, while John, Partington, the turnpike-man, the gypfey chief and his affociate repaired to the caftle. But early next morning fuch additional difcoveries were made, and of fo complicated a nature, that John Fitzorton found it expedient to confult higher judicial powers than his own. All farther concealments were, therefore, of neceffity, given up, and the whole gang of confpirators were fully committed to take their trial at the enfuing affizes. Accordingly they were moved under a proper guard to the county jail, and no other charge given to the friends of the abbey, and the caftle, than to forbear fpeaking on the bufinefs in the hearing either of Olivia or Caroline.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### CAROLINE'S SECOND DEPARTURE.

MEANTIME the recovery of Miſs Stuart went favourably on, and by gentle acceſſions of bodily and mental ſtrength ſhe came to a reſolution of no longer ſuffering herſelf to puzzle betwixt viſionary and exiſting objects.

Indiſtinct and impreſſive forms—thoſe to which ſhe had awaked,—ſtill moved before her mind's eye, and ſhe at length demanded of her brother an unequivocal anſwer to a few ſhort and ſimple queſtions. "My deareſt Charles, you are not now to learn that my nature always ſuffers more from conjecture of evil than from the evil itſelf; or, rather, conjecture is the greateſt evil I can feel. I perceive, and I am ſure with the kindeſt motive, you have all hid from me the one thing needful for me to be informed of; yet I have not brought forward the

 enquiry

enquiry myſelf till I felt, as now I do, the power of ſupporting its reſult, be it what it may. Tell me then without more reſerve, whether, by any tremendous hazard, you have or have not loſt your friend? is the noble Olivia a mourning widow—or a happy wife?"

"The latter, Oh! bleſſed be God! the latter," anſwered Charles. He then entered into the explanations he had ſo long and ardently deſired, and which had been ſo perpetually in check. Caroline fervently paid her acknowledgments to heaven, and changed the ſubject; but the moment of receiving this ſoul-relieving intelligence, was, likewiſe, the moment of deciding on the line of conduct ſhe ſhould purſue. Her doubts were diſpelled as to the only point ſhe would allow herſelf to aſk. The horrible idea of Henry Fitzorton's death, and by the hand of Charles Stuart, was removed. He lived!—his wife was happy!—without farther inveſtigation as to the ſtate of his affections—whether he ſtill loved, or had forgot Caroline;—what where his looks, or what his words—how great

great his firmneſs—or how little his fortitude—ſhe knew there was but one courſe for her to take. The ſickneſs of her father had ſummoned her to the place ſhe had long avoided;—his death terminated every duty which attached to that ſpot. Henry was married—Olivia had beſtowed her pity, love, and bounty on her parent, on her brother, and on herſelf. Following therefore, the ſacred impulſe of an unaffectedly pure and juſt mind, which, when again reſtored to itſelf, combined paſt and preſent circumſtances—without proudly or raſhly ſtraining itſelf to ſee what in heroick conflict it might be ſcrewed to—an experiment which it is, at all times, rather vanity than virtue to attempt—without too much confidence, or too much ſuſpicion of others, or of herſelf, ſhe modeſtly reſolved upon taking the paths which might lead her out of temptation—the paths which to gain and to keep, forms the daily prayer of—alas! daily-erring mortals.

Caroline had not a doubt but to her that peace would be more ſurely found in the track that led to the ſoft receſs from which

which ſhe had ſo lately been called; and in a conference ſhe held with the holy Arthur, the day following that ſhe had with her brother, ſhe explained to him her intentions. She explained them in the ſacred moment of her religious confeſſion; a duty ſhe had poſtponed, till the faculties of her mind were ſo far recovered, as to perceive, clearly, every object of offence and of rectitude. The monk entered her chamber, and found her in preparation to receive him. In the heart of Caroline Stuart religion wore none of her trappings; pure and holy and ſimple, it there reſided as in its proper ſhrine. The tinkling bell—the illumined taper—the ſolemn pealing of the organ—the myſtick murmurs of the prieſthood—and the breath of the frankincenſe, had there no ſanctuary. She rejected not the publick ceremonies of her faith, but the perfumes of her incenſe aſcended from an unſullied heart. That heart required the ſolace and the aſſiſtance of one whom ſhe knew to be a ſincere miniſter of God; and aided by him, her ſpirit thirſted to commune with God

God himſelf. Yet to the one what had ſhe to confeſs, that might not be humbly offered to the other? Before HIM then, who is the prime ſource of every other power, ſhe poured forth her ſoul in acknowledgment—for the bleſſings which, ſhe felt aſſured, would crown the death of her father—for the preſervation of her benefactor's life—for the recovery of his happineſs, ſhould it be yet incomplete—for the long and unclouded days of Olivia, and of her children—and laſtly, for heavenly aid in the future government of her own heart.

Animated, yet tranquillized, by theſe effuſions, ſhe delineated to Arthur her deſign and its motives; but ſhe conceived her return to the aſylum, of which John Fitzorton was the patron, made it matter of right his permiſſion ſhould be firſt obtained.

The monk ſaw into all her motives, implied or expreſſed, and imparted them to John, with reſervation only of ſome ideas that he thought it no way material for the

Colonel to hear, but which were, in truth, ſimilar to thoſe that lay in the receſſes of John's breaſt; yet, which in his opinion, as in that of the holy confeſſor, rather exalted than humbled the character of the confeſſed. Without dwelling on the ſubject, John aſſured father Arthur that he would undertake to give proper reaſons at the caſtle, while the arrangements were making at the abbey. In truth, the whirl of circumſtances had again brought back upon John, perilous ſubjects he had ſo inceſſantly laboured to keep at a diſtance, and he was not ſorry to ſee one occaſion more preſent itſelf, that carried with it, at leaſt, the aſpect of preſerving the peace of his family and of his friends.

Accordingly, John contrived for ſome days to repreſent the abbey as improper for Olivia's farther viſits; and Burton continued to aſſure her that her favourite Caroline was daily more and more convaleſcent, by which means Arthur had the better opportunity to prepare for the journey, of which himſelf and his Indian were to be the companions.

These preparations, however, were not a little obstructed by persons of all descriptions flocking to the abbey, to make their heartfelt enquiries after the health of Miss Stuart, and to pay their visits of respect to the Lieutenant: those pensioners, in particular who had been bequeathed, by Lady Stuart to her daughter, many of whom were still alive, and the objects of Caroline's undiminished bounty, could not be restrained from telling their daily, almost hourly, tales of gratitude, to their benefactress; and amongst these garrulous stories, she found out, what but for them she never could have known,—that ever since her absence it had been the custom of Henry Fitzorton, to make the tour of the Abbey parish, on the first day of every new month,—in the manner Lady Stuart and Caroline, he knew, had been accustomed to do,—whenever he was down at the castle; and that the apothecary represented him in his absence; and when any of the pensioners were ill, or unhappy, Henry would always bring them comfort, and come

and ſit by, and nurſe, and talk to them, till they cried for joy.

In ſhort, from the unfortunate, but neceſſary, moment of Caroline Stuart's firſt departure, Henry had conſidered her poor, as his poor, devolved upon his heart, by a kind of natural inheritance. And while his Olivia employed herſelf, in making happy her cottagers, he would take his rounds of benevolence, on the like principle, as the agent of Caroline: and for this to be diſcovered thus unexpectedly, by the very objects of the bounty, was at once delightful and diſtreſſing to Caroline. The reports of the death and penitence of Sir Guiſe, and the return of his ſon and daughter, flew, through the whole county, with the ſpeed of thought; and the tributary marks of loving-kindneſs ſhewn to the ſurvivors, by all ranks and ſexes, and orders of religion, retarded the execution of Caroline's deſign: and thus was the abbey —which folly and vice had brought into diſrepute and deſertion, and which had been ſhunned even by the ruſtick, whoſe half-

half-thatched ſhed was expoſed to all the winds of heaven—redeemed by the return of wiſdom and virtue.

At length, however, a favourable moment occurred; and Caroline with her ſuite took her ſecond leave of the abbey; and by the contrivance of Colonel Fitzorton, they performed their journey in one of thoſe carriages which Partington and Henry had loaded for her defence. But it had ſtill been found neceſſary for Caroline to begin her fatigues, after others had begun their repoſe;—after Olivia, and, perhaps, Henry himſelf, were in the arms of ſleep.—Yet, amidſt the cloudings of an unquiet night, as ſhe paſſed the dimly diſcovered turrets of the caſtle—ah! let not the moſt rigid virtue chide the ſigh, the parting ſigh, which mixed in her bleſſing on the inhabitants! for it was pure, and almoſt as ſilent as the tear which courſed along her cheek, when ſhe breathed an adieu to the chapel, where now both her parents were entombed!—There appeared to her

mind little diftinction as to the duration of the farewell, for till her lifelefs corpfe fhould be conveyed to the one, fhe never meant to approach the other:—" Never, oh! never more fhall I pafs thefe facred towers—that holy vault—but when I am enclofed in the unconfcious hearfe. Farewell—Oh! fcenes of anguifh and of blifs,—farewell!"

## CHAPTER XXII.

### PRESENCE OF MIND.

THUS was the ill-fated abbey once more left defolate, although Charles Stuart intended to remain till the family ruins could be put into a fomewhat clearer ftate, than they were left by his unhappy father; and till he faw what might be the event of a trial, in which his curiofity was fingularly interefted. He purpofed alfo, at a proper time after the deceafe of his father, to invite

vite the hand of Johanna from the Colonel, her adopted father; and, in the mean time, when that amiable girl, and Mrs. Herbert, could be ſpared by Olivia, his further plan was, to return with them to their inſulated retreat, with a view of affording his ſiſter the conſoling ſociety of her accuſtomed friends, while he ſhould avail himſelf of John's ſalutary reproof in regard to his long-neglected military duties.

If, however, returning clouds hung over the abbey, unuſual brightneſs again beamed on the caſtle. Sacred to his promiſe, and at length conſiſtent with himſelf, Henry reſigned the care of Caroline to the brother and friends who ſurrounded her, and dedicated himſelf entirely to domeſtick concerns and to Olivia. Whatever yet remained of his unconquered thoughts, ſuch were his actions. In this interval, the hope which his tender and happy wife had promiſed was fulfilled by the birth of a third child, and being a female infant, the mother reſolved it ſhould be baptiſed Angelica. "You ſee," cried John, rejoicing in

in the event of Olivia's ſafety, "it was not, my dear Henry, to be a Raphael." At a more confirmed moment of his ſiſter-in-law's health, this was repeated to Olivia, who thus expounded her dream to Henry, mixing in the detail, by ſuffrage of John, all that related to their ſecret tranſactions at the abbey, and their motives, ſo far as they were known to herſelf. Previous to the ceremony of chriſtening, Mrs. Herbert and the children were to be ſent for from the Bury, and that all might be compleat, ſhe expreſſed a hope that her favourite Caroline would honour a ſecret wiſh ſhe had formed, to become godmother of the young Angelica.

As the departure of Caroline took place ſo ſhort a time before Olivia's confinement, and as the latter knew ſhe was not in a ſtate of health or ſpirits to aſſiſt her friend in a moment of ſuch trial, it had not been deemed proper by Burton to diſcompoſe Mrs. Fitzorton, by any mention of her friend's departure; but as Henry now looked to the Colonel for the materials of an

an anſwer to his wife's requiſition, John informed her that a change of air and of objects had made it neceſſary for her to move from the abbey. "I have a meſſage to deliver on that ſubject, from my ſiſter," interpoſed Charles, who was preſent, though Henry was not then in the room; "I will give it you in her words: for indeed it concerns us all."—

—"We are ſafely arrived at our place of refuge, my deareſt brother, and found the worthy Denniſon in the perfect enjoyment of his good old age. The rapture of Floreſco, is never, you know, to be deſcribed, when his ſimple heart is moved by nature's powerful hand. And ſhe touched him moſt tenderly at the ſight of his ancient friend, who was not leſs affectionately though leſs tumultuouſly happy. Another ancient friend was gladdened at the view, obſcured as it was, of our good old man —poor little Fitz: who bore his long journey paſſing well. Father Arthur has ſpared our veteran the particulars of that heavy event, to which, I feel, I am not as

reſigned

refigned as, I know, it is my duty to be. Alas! my brother."—Here the Lieutenant paffed over fome fentences in a little confufion, but foon recovered himfelf and went on.

"I muft charge you, my deareft Charles, with anfwers to the enquiries, which, I cannot but believe, will be made concerning me at the caftle, and to explain my wanderings. Let not, I conjure you, the ever-dear and refpected Mrs. Fitzorton, nor good Mrs. Herbert, nor my fweet Johanna, attribute my flight to any thing ungrateful or unfriendly. Ah! it has been from far other motives. So far as you know, let me implore you to explain them, and exculpate your fifter and your friend."

"It is enough," faid Olivia, "I am ever too felfifh. I ought not to repine at what has grieved me, but on the fubject of my friends I confefs myfelf a very mifer. I know that the health, fpirits, and happinefs of my Caroline, required a temporary removal from hence, and I yield. Bleffed be her abfence! bleffed be her return!"

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### FIENDS UNMASKED.

IT is become neceſſary for us to quit again the innocent, and look back upon the guilty. The time of trial for the gang, which had been fully committed, being arrived, they were brought from the county priſon where they had been ſome weeks confined in ſeparate dungeons; and deeds of fouleſt darkneſs, as well as their perpetrators, were, at length, to ſee the light.

The crimes of this banditti were of a nature ſo complicated, and private wrongs ſo mixed with publick offences, that there ſeems no other mode of detailing them with any clearneſs, but by adopting the meaſures, and in ſome degree the language of the perſons who conducted the proſecu-

tion,

tion, ſubſtantiated the charges, or brought the trial to iſſue.

"The bill on which the priſoners were indicted," ſaid the counſel who opened the caſe, "branches into ſeveral counts, moſt of which, taken ſeparately, are capital, but the leading features of offence may be divided into three parts, viz. conſpiracy, forgery, and murder!"

The proſecutors and witneſſes called in ſupport of theſe heinous offences, were ſome of the moſt reſpectable men in the county; the perſons accuſed were ſome of the moſt daring and infamous that ever diſgraced humanity. Amongſt the firſt, were Mr. Partington, John Fitzorton, Charles Stuart, True George, and ſeveral worthy domeſticks from their reſpective families; and the gentlemen to whoſe lot it fell progreſſively to diſcuſs, and legally to determine upon the evidence which ſhould be offered, were of integrity ſo unwarped, that, had a friend, or brother, unfortunately violated the laws, and been brought before them, the moſt impartial juſtice would

would have been adminiſtered, although their inward hearts might have bled at the award which that juſtice impelled.

The leading counſel for the proſecution was Mr. Morgan, the honourable man who had been ſolicitor to the Fitzortons many years, now advanced to the bar, and whom the Colonel had already employed to puniſh ſome of the enemies, and to reward ſome of the friends of ſociety; and the judge who happened at that time to be on the weſtern circuit, was James Fitzorton, then arrived at the higheſt honour and truſt of the judicial character.

The firſt perſon called upon by Mr. Morgan, to give evidence, was Colonel John Fitzorton, who depoſed, that the day after the priſoners were apprehended, he was induced to explore the place where it had been found expedient to ſecure them. On arriving at the mouth of the dungeon, one of the witneſſes, Jonathan Armſtrong, who had kept watch through the night, made report, that almoſt immediately after the raging multitude, and the caſtle party, had

had left the ſpot, an indiſtinct kind of noiſe aſcended from the cave as of many perſons whiſpering, and groaning faintly; but though the groaning kind of ſounds remained, the voices were ſoon more low and muttering, as if perſons had moved to a greater diſtance—that, while the voices were loud, he looked down into the dungeon, and ſaw a flaſhing vapoury kind of light as if in the midſt of a fog, but when the groans grew fainter the flaſhing was gone, and only a few miſty ſparks were left; that very ſoon after, all was thick darkneſs, and a dreadful dumb kind of ſilence had continued ever ſince. True George, another of the night-guards, corroborated this account; and added, that as he thruſt his body downwards into the cell, he was annoyed by a ſtench as if of ſulphur and other combuſtible matter, from which iſſued fire and ſmoke; and the muttering groans, which the former deponent ſpoke of, ſeemed to come from the midſt of it.

From theſe, and other reports, which had been previouſly made, John Fitzorton further depoſed, that ſuſpecting ſomething of a criminal nature was yet to be diſcovered, he ſelected half a dozen of his friends, and deſcended armed into the dungeon; ſeveral of the villagers following in deſpite of all remonſtrance: that he was prepared to find, from a witneſs, brought by Gapper, the bottom of the gulph much wider than George had deſcribed it; yet on gaining the bottom, he was amazed to perceive every one of the culprits, who had been thruſt into the cave bound, had diſappeared. Conducted, however, by Gapper's witneſs, whoſe evidence was material, he proceeded further into the cavern, which grew broader at every ſtep. It was vaulted above and below, but every wholeſome breeze abſorbed by a noxious miſt, which cluſtered ſo thick around the lights, and hung ſuch heavy damps upon the glaſs, and horn of the lanterns, or threw ſuch an infectious ſteam about the torches, that the guide was often at a loſs how to direct

direct their steps; that stopping to listen, all was silent; but after moving on a few paces, and then making another pause, a confused murmur of voices assailed his ears —the sounds seemed to issue from different parts of the abyss; when moving onward such scenes presented themselves to the view as augmented the horrors. A fire now struck the view of the witnesses, and the objects of their search were found distributed in various forms of misery. One alone amongst them, with dreadful intrepidity, sat unawed; one who seemed to preside over the whole, and was, at the moment of discovery, preparing to cast the limb of a victim into the flames, at which she sat, and to complete our astonishment, this fury was a woman. 'Alas! it is even as I told your honours,' then ejaculated the witness, who had been our chief guide, and who was likewise a female: 'I knew he must die, and now his murderers are trying to conceal the murder.' Instantly," proceeded the deponent; "every attendant secured one or other of the fugitives,

tives; we ſeized a variety of offenſive weapons, and other inſtruments which lay beſide them, and ſurrounded the principal fiend. She roſe undaunted, ſtood fixed, and ſeeing us advance, kept us a moment at bay, utterring horrible execrations that reverberated through all the windings of the dungeon. Overpowered, however, by numbers, ſhe yielded in contemptuous ſilence: Meantime, one of the banditti— who was trying to eſcape, and endeavouring to make terms of mercy with George, Jonathan, and Floreſco, after he was caught, attempted his preſervation by informing them 'the ſecret door which they were guarding led to the ſubterraneous paſſage, and as he was in the ſecret of all its labyrinths, he would have the honour to conduct all their honours, not doubting but they would ſpeak a good word for him ſhould their honours think it worth while to take any further notice of the buſineſs.' But the indignant George ſpurning the offer, left the trembling wretch in the cuſtody of Jonathan, while he haſted with the

the intelligence to our party. Meaſures were hereupon taken to profit by the information; and the reſtoring air, having, by this time, in ſome degree, purged the atmoſphere of its deadly obſtructions, time was given us to collect, amaſs, and carry off thoſe more annoying objects, alive and dead, which, fouler than the breath of peſtilence, had polluted the dungeon."

All theſe circumſtances being fully corroborated by the other witneſſes, whoſe depoſitions were ſeverally taken, the learned counſel then brought forward a body of evidence that eſtabliſhed a variety of facts.

But what was the indignation of the court, and of the aſſembled multitude, when they ſaw—and what will be that of the worthy reader, when he finds, that this excavated gang was chiefly formed of thoſe depredators and aſſaſſins, who were once aſſociated with the late Sir Guiſe Stuart!—that the wretch who would have eſcaped from juſtice, by impeaching others in the moment of detection, was the execrable

crable Nicholas Dabble! and that the chief female fiend, who was found in the bowels of the earth at her infernal rites, was the daring Lady Tempeſt Stuart!

We have briefly to unfold the cauſe of this horrid confederacy. Valentine Miles, and Lady Tempeſt Stuart, diſappointed, diſgraced, and traverſed in many of their important machinations at the abbey and at the caſtle, their hate for ſome of the inhabitants, and their burning deſire for others, ſurvived all their miſcarriages, mortifications, and even puniſhments, ſo effectually, that ſoon after her Ladyſhip had ſhaken off her huſband, ſhe boldly and avowedly eſtabliſhed her Hazard, and *Rouge et Noir* tables, and her Pharo bank:—where contribution ſuppers * and the choiceſt wines were provided at fifty pounds a route; and ſhe ranked amongſt her cuſtomers, and ſubſcribers, an indiſcriminate mixture of both ſexes, from the finiſhed ſharper to the raw inexperienced youth!

* Vide a Treatiſe on the Police of the Metropolis.

 But,

But, amidſt all the ſplendid plunder of the day, and the ſtill more gorgeous ruins of the night, the flames of vengeance and of deſire conflagrated her boſom: the ſtinging thoughts of Olivia's marriage with Henry, and of Caroline's decided paſſion for him alone, ſupplied fuel to the one paſſion; and reflections on her innumerable degradations fed the rage of the other. Her Valentine ſecretly ſympathized in both: they brought into one point of view what they had ſuffered, from the firſt outrage to the laſt—his diſgraces at the Adſell aſſaſſination—the ſcorn with which Caroline received his vows of love—and the ſnapping of Henry's fingers in the apartments of Lady Stuart—then Mrs. Tempeſt—where he ſwore that the deareſt blood of the offender's heart ſhould one day repay the inſult—all tended to accumulate the venom in his breaſt. Lady Stuart, alſo, brooded over the contumely ſhe had endured, as well on ſome of the above, as on various other accounts. Foiled in every attempt to embitter the happineſs of Olivia:

—her

—her letters intercepted—her feeble ſtratagems rendered abortive either by True George, or John Fitzorton, and driven by reiterated diſappointments to deſpair:—more particularly ſince the Colonel's conduct and menaces, at the abbey carouſals—the collected poiſons of her fury far outſtript even that of Miles; and the ſavage paſſion ſhe yet felt for Henry, mixt ſtrangely with her unquenchable and now maddening thirſt of revenge, which burnt the fiercer for being long unappeaſed. The moſt dire intents, indeed, had been accumulating in the minds of both Valentine and Lady Stuart, before either dared to confide with the other their foul deſigns. But the moment at laſt arrived. Both perceived they might communicate. The exchange of one ſanguinary look conveyed from eye to eye, and from heart to heart, the dreadful ſympathy! An oath of union paſt, as by ſecret intelligence, between them, and they read in every feature, without utterance of a word, that the compact ſhould be cemented by blood. They ſnatched

ed the hand of each other, and, in that moment, the murder of John and Henry Fitzorton, of Caroline and Olivia,—were determined.

The ſecret council of blood broke up after paſſing the following reſolutions: To remove every obſtruction in the way of compaſſing the grand deſideratum:—To conſider every other loſs, gain, intereſt, or difficulty, or danger, as ſubordinate, till ſome of the victims were ſtruggling in their arms, and others laid dead at their feet. In purſuit of theſe demoniack ends, the means were proportionate. The coſt, indeed, would be enormous; but avarice was now a ſecondary paſſion. Beſides which, the lady's *banks* had literally overflowed of late to ſuch a degree, that the golden tides of half her ruined friends and vanquiſhed enemies, had rolled their treaſures into her hand: and Valentine, independent of his ſhare in thoſe more obvious frauds, had learned the ſcience of money-making another way: for which a noble ambition of calling into action all his verſatile powers, and

and ſhewing they were alike adapted for the buſineſs of one part, as for the pleaſures of the other part of the metropolis, he had recently engaged in ſome of the coinages that are employed in London; and the amicable way in which they carried on this buſineſs, might have led ſuperficial obſervers to believe they had always been, and then were, the very beſt friends in the world. Dabble, on the other hand, from a run of adverſity in a new branch of atrocity, had found more than uſual exerciſe for his little niceties.

But he had been unfortunate ſince we laſt ſaw him—unfortunate in advancing money upon bonds, title-deeds, and eſtates in reverſion, in hopes of uſurious intereſt, by which the courts were open only to iſſue out warrants for apprehending him, and ſhut againſt him for ever as a practiſing attorney: and laſtly, with theſe ſtrokes of ill-luck, he had loſt his conſequence and credit with my Lady and Valentine. Yet the time was now come round when his daily profeſſed, and almoſt as daily rejected,

 ſervices

ſervices were again acceptable. Various inferior inſtruments, and ſubordinate wheels in the grand machine of the caſtle and abbey conſpiracy, were now wanted, and Mr. Nicholas Dabble was employed to collect theſe. The buſineſs was opened with very little ceremony; and the terms ſettled without difficulty. He undertook the thing on ſpeculation, and with unwearied alacrity.—A choſen band of his old acquaintance, to whom he had before given jobs, and whom he knew to be ready for all vicious occaſions at a moment's warning, were muſtered, diſciplined, and trained to action.—Firſt, the ſtump-maker and chum, who ſince their bargain with Jonathan and Jerom, had found their account in aſſuming their own legs, to run away with parcels of which they tricked boys, ſhopmen, or perſons coming from the country.—Secondly, the ingenious Mr. Smith, who conducted Sir Guiſe to the Hand-in-hand, and who had recently been advanced from ſtealing goods, as a petty pilferer, to opening a houſe for receiving ſuch goods, knowing

ing them to be ſtolen.—Thirdly, Mr. Shifter, late the waiter at the Hand-in-hand. —Fourthly, the lady who acted as foil to the widow, on the memorable night of Henry's viſit to the theatre.—Fifthly, the two loving brothers, David and Gamaliel Otley, who had been in perpetual ſtrife for the palm of roguery. There were, alſo, added to the phalanx, ſome of the perſons known to belong to the fraternity of thieves.

But while Mr. Dabble was collecting his daring and ſtrong minded bravoes to cover the retreat, or in caſe of obſtinate reſiſtance to proceed to the laſt extremities, Dabble himſelf conducting the ſecret expedition as general of the banditti, under the command of Field-marſhal Valentine Miles and his aſſociate, the latter was not idle. One of the firſt loves of Lady Stuart it may be remembered was Mr. Thomas, whom ſhe ſtill conſidered as an old friend, and who had been part of her eſtabliſhment while ſhe reſided at the abbey. He there became acquainted with an under groom of the manor-houſe, of ſuch promiſing ta-

 lents,

lents, that he took on himſelf the trouble of training him to rob his maſter, and moſt of his fellow-ſervants of ſundry articles, which Mr. Thomas ſaid he would purchaſe; but when the theft was made, and the ſpoil preſented, he thought proper all at once to ſcruple—ſeized upon the young delinquent, and ſwore he would produce witneſſes to prove—though no perſon had been preſent at the time—that he had offered the ſtolen goods to him, but that he refuſed to receive them, and only had them in his poſſeſſion like an honeſt man, to make diſcovery. Terrified at this, being then young in crime, the boy ſupplicated for mercy, which the tender-hearted Mr. Thomas granted on certain conditions;—to wit—that he ſhould undertake to tranſact any buſineſs he might be truſted with for any part of the caſtle or manor-houſe families, and as that truſt was faithfully, or unfaithfully diſcharged, mercy or juſtice ſhould be adminiſtered. The trembling culprit promiſed, and was almoſt immediately employed, to deliver a letter to Olivia from

Lady

Lady Tempeſt, which, had it fallen into the hands of the former, would have torn up the happineſs, perhaps, of her whole life by the roots; for it ſtruck a dagger at the faith, honour, and tenderneſs of Henry Fitzorton in every line. The letter-carrier meeting, however, with True George while he was watching his opportunity, Olivia then being at the caſtle, ſome ſuſpicious circumſtances enſued, which brought on a diſcovery; and with this George hurried —the boy in his gripe—to John Fitzorton, who affected to chide George for ſtopping a ſervant in diſcharge of his duty, ſaid the letter ſhould be taken care of, and diſmiſſed the boy, only deſiring him to deliver future preſents either to him or George, and that for every ſuch pacquet he ſhould receive a gratuity. The boy promiſed, and kept his word, being well paid by both parties, without ſaying a word of his double dealing to either. George thought it ſtrange, till the Colonel explained; and thus was Olivia's peace preſerved from a train of evils, with jealouſy, the hydra, at

their head. But this boy advanced too rapidly in the furtive profeſſion which Mr. Thomas had taught him, and was ſent away in diſgrace. Mr. Thomas himſelf was expelled ſoon after, when the abbey arrangements broke up; but he was fated to great preferment, as keeper of a Regiſter-office, and there his old friend the ſtable-boy came, after many other diſgraces, to look for a place. The banditti plan was then beginning to form. Thomas, ſtill ſuppoſing he had the boy on the hip, recommended him to Lady Stuart; he was ſoon after enrolled amongſt the conſpirators, for his brilliant ſuggeſtions of the gypſey plan,—the ſubterraneous cavern,—and an aſſertion that he knew ſome of thoſe who had really been amongſt the abbey tribe. "They are now clippers and coiners," ſaid the boy; "no longer ago than yeſterday, one of them told me my fortune, which was, that I ſhould ſoon again ſee the old abbey—and ecod, if we go upon this expedition the fortune will come true, you know, Mr. Thomas." In purſuance of his promiſe, he

he introduced the *ce-divant* gypfies to Miles and my Lady, the former of whom recognized five of his money-makers, four of whom were delighted at the thought of another frolick to the abbey, afferting that they could carry on part of their new employment as well in one place as another,—under ground as above ground,—in town or country,—and that they would undertake not only to bring back the gypfey complexion into their own faces, but to tinge every other, as well as drefs up all the characters in the true gypfey ftyle, fo as to make it impoffible for parents to know their children, or children their parents, befides teaching the occult fcience, and all the cant of the profeffion, concluding with the following declaration:—"That they owed John Fitzorton and True George a grudge for fome rigorous acts of the former, confequent on the reports of the latter, and would affift in the deftruction of both with all their hearts and fouls." The fifth was a very young creature, and followed her affociates reluctantly.

The full complement of conſpirators was now obtained—they ſoon eſtabliſhed themſelves in the abbey-woods without oppoſition. They had previouſly gained intelligence of Sir Guiſe, and the return of the whole abbey party, and found means to make themſelves maſters of the exact ſtate of affairs at the caſtle and chapel-houſe. The fiend like preſident, in her tenfold diſguiſe, often ſhot her dire and death-like glances at the victims ſhe had marked as ſhe paced her rounds of the caſtle, the abbey, and the chapel-houſe; ſhe felt a horrid joy as ſhe caught a glance at Henry, herſelf unſeen; the pangs of deſire agonized her heart, even while ſhe meditated the murther of the object. John Fitzorton, True George, Olivia, Caroline, Charles, and father Arthur, alternately aſſailed her view as ſhe prowled the wood paths; lighted her fire of withered leaves, or came laden like the reſt of her ſable companions, with the fallen branches, or with the alms, which, for the ſake of preſerving her aſſumed character, ſhe condeſcended to collect.

lect. Her glut of vengeance, indeed, made her forego all claims, and forget all ideas of former ſelf-love. She ſet the example of hardihood and a diſdain of difficulty to the reſt. She abſtained from every exceſs, though their rags, and moving furniture, and habitation concealed, were enriched by the choiceſt fare. Theſe ſhe diſtributed prudently to the reſt, but practiſed a ſtern ſelf-denial on her own habits of luxury. Her profuſe treſſes were darkened by art, and tucked within a dirty coif; and while her grim aſſociates ſtretched along the woods, or ſlumbered in the caverns, ſhe ſtill held watch, and paſſed the night in gloomy vigilance, intent upon her prey. Miles was no leſs diligent. Dabble, was alternately in every quarter. Every evil ſpirit was either on guard, or on the ſcout; thrice was that part of their plan, which reſpected Henry and John, on the edge of being effected by the ſilent operation of poiſons, but was of neceſſity ſuſpended. The death of Sir Guiſe alone prevented his aſſaſſination, and the night of his funeral

was at length judged to be moſt apt for the grand burſt of vengeance; but it was broken off by a quarrel amongſt themſelves. The brother Otleys were ſtill at ſtrife about ſuperiority, but now Gamaliel was endued with a truſt more confidential and more intrepid than that of David. To him was allotted the diſtinction of taking vengeance on John Fitzorton, and a choſen band was appointed him for that enterprize. David expoſtulated, and threatened to go himſelf inſtantly to the caſtle, and make diſcovery of the whole plot. He was directly ſeized by the furious tribe, and till his fate could be determined, the dungeon of the abbey was his priſon-houſe; there they ſuffered him, either through reſentment, or the abſorbing image of revenge on others, to die of famine. One of the females, however, leſs callous than the reſt, and who had in a former gypſey expedition attached herſelf to a youth of the *legitimate* tribe, as thoſe at the caſtle were called, even with the ſon of the chief, took pity on his ſufferings, and relieved him, but found him almoſt

gaſping

gaſping for breath. "I die," ſaid he, "but let it not be unrevenged on thoſe who have murdered me,—fly this inſtant,—take with you this bundle of rags, which hold the ſecret fates of the nobleſt men,—the lovelieſt women,—my ancient maſters,—my beſt friends,—all I have wronged,—all who are marked for an almoſt immediate and dreadful death,—if you would eſcape the hell that now burns within me, and haply ſhall burn for ever,—loſe not a moment,—away! I die!" The wretch, with a deſpairing hand, ſeized part of the food which ſhe had brought, and expired devouring it. The terrified Jeputha, ſo was ſhe called, ruſhed from the cavern by the ſecret door, which ſhe had explored, and gaining the woods that united with the ſubterraneous paſſage unperceived, and favoured by the night, ſhe followed an impulſe ſhe could not reſiſt, not to make her reports at the caſtle; but accelerated both by horror and affright ſhe travelled onward, nor reſted her ſtep till ſhe gained the Bury, where, ſeeking the tribe who were protected

tected by Partington, ſhe gave into the hands of the gypſey-chief and his ſon, the myſtick-papers, which led to the diſcovery, and by means of which their deteſtable machinations were prevented. Thus was the ungrateful David Otley appointed to ſave the lives of thoſe whom he had often betrayed, and whoſe death he treacherouſly imagined and deviſed.

When the criminals, after they had been ſeparated, were brought up collectively to receive ſentence,—never has there been paſſed a final judgment, as to the deſtiny of this world, with more temper or equity, regulated by wiſdom and ſoftened by commiſeration, even for the depravity of our fellow-mortals :—never has a verdict been found more to the ſatisfaction of all orders of men.

Moſt of the delinquents were capitally convicted, and remanded to the place from whence they came, till the aweful day that ſhould ſeparate them for ever from the community they had ſo long diſhonoured and deſpoiled ; and we will now leave them

upon

upon the records of our hiſtory, as juſt, but terrible examples.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### ASCENDING SPIRITS.

TO the puniſhment and ignominy of the vicious, however, ſucceeded an event of the moſt unexpected kind, from the relation of which the virtuous muſt feel a pang.

Olivia Fitzorton had reſiſted every perſuaſion of her friend the apothecary, in regard to nouriſhing her child at her own breaſt, on account of a pectoral complaint, the only one from which, perſonally ſpeaking, ſhe had ever felt inconvenience in her whole life. She argued, that the infant which drew its firſt and pureſt nouriſhment from the boſom of a ſtranger, was, in effect, but half its mother's child: ſhe hence deemed it a practice ſo unnatural, as to be but one remove from a ſucking babe being

turned

turned out of doors by its mother, without any nourifhment at all: and "if it be true," would fhe fay, "that any part of the difpofition of the fofter parent be infufed with the milk, the fafhion of the times can only be juftified when the natural nurfe, confcious of a bad conftitution, or of a worfe heart, trembles at the thought of entailing upon her offspring her own infirmities of body or of mind; but, even in that cafe, fhe infifted, that the utmoft inveftigation fhould be made into the health and morals of the woman to whom the child was to be entrufted, otherwife, fhe conceived, that the real mother was as refponfible for the future forrows, fins, and fickly or tainted habits of her infant, as if they were more immediately derived from herfelf. And as to the circumftance of a fpoiled fhape, or any other caufe affigned by ambitious beauty, or negligent fafhion, for the transfer of their offspring to a hireling, fhe would have blufhed with fhame, or wept with grief, could any one have judged her capable of

covering the vanity of a wife and a parent under ſo unfeeling an apology."

It is, however, certain, that in a few pulmonary caſes, a mother cannot poſſibly indulge in a more fatal tenderneſs than to ſuckle her own child: and an injury which Olivia had in very early youth received, was unfortunately of that kind.

She owned, however, that it was poſſible ſhe might, in the preſent inſtance, be wrong, as ſhe did not feel herſelf quite ſo ſtout as uſual, but the cuſtom was ſo natural in general, that ſhe could not allow herſelf to be an exception. The infant Angelica was, therefore, fed from its mother's breaſt, and exhibited every ſign of good health, during the firſt month: the ſolemnity, and feſtival of the chriſtening, at which, on account of Caroline's abſence, Johanna became ſponſor, was performed, and obſerved with all the innocent mirth that affection, decorum, and gratitude could ſupply. The conduct of her Henry, and of every friend, was all, in effect, that love itſelf, could, in its fondeſt ſolicitude, perform. The child continued thriving

thriving to its eighth month, when the hooping-cough weakened it to a degree, that the tender mother was induced to keep it at the breaſt long after Mr. Burton, and, indeed, the parent's own health, had given warning it ought to be weaned: the ravaging diſorder, on arriving at its criſis, induced convulſions, which put an end to the life of the babe on the day that it had accompliſhed its firſt year. The phyſician who had attended, Partington's brother, apprehended that a degree of putridity accompanied inflammation in the laſt week of the child's diſorder, and was earneſt with Olivia to ſuſpend her attendance; with this requiſition being ſeconded by Henry, ſhe complied, as he inſiſted on remaining with her in the apartment, and as he ſhared the love, to ſhare the danger of a parent. On the firſt favourable ſymptom of abating heat, however reported with caution by the good apothecary, the mother flew to the cradle, where ſeeing luſtre in the eye, and bloom on the cheek of her child, although theſe were but the inſidious fluſhings, and

flame,

ſlame, of the malady—ſhe careſſed her little Angelica with a mother's ardent ſincerity —but, alas, ſhe at the ſame time drew venom from its lips—Olivia was herſelf ſeized with a fever the ſucceeding evening, which made ſuch devouring progreſs as to baffle every human aid, and Olivia and her babe, the former almoſt as free from the tinge of the world as the latter, expired within a few hours of each other.

The ſuſpicion that her diſorder was infectious, prevailed neither on Henry nor John Fitzorton to withhold their attendance: the prayers and tears of Olivia could avail nothing with the former—nor was the latter ever abſent, but when it was inevitable.—Neither could Johanna or Mrs. Herbert, who had long been returned from the Bury, be deterred from adminiſtering to their friend—the children alone were reſtrained, and theſe only becauſe Partington had literally run away with them to the Bury, on the firſt mention of danger, but came back himſelf to the caſtle, and was one of the moſt aſſiduous in attempting the preſervation

ſervation of its faireſt inhabitant. "Ah! deny us not—deny not your Henry, at leaſt!—O moſt good—moſt excellent—his claims in all you hope, in all you fear!" ſaid he.—"As I have long lived for you, ſo I ſwear to you, beſt of wives, and parents—would I die!"

But the angel of death had its mandate, and Olivia obeyed. Yet ſhe was in the fulleſt poſſeſſion, and almoſt in the enjoyment, of her reaſon till within a few minutes of her being removed to regions, where the proudeſt reach of human thought is as infant feebleneſs. Her lateſt powers of mind were employed in aſſuring her ſurrounding family—and ſhe deſired thoſe who loved her, which was, in truth, all who knew her, might be aſſured alſo, that, as ſhe had long lived, ſo was ſhe now dying, the happieſt of the happy! She tenderly embraced all preſent in their turn. She joined the hands of Johanna and the Lieutenant—of True George and of her gentle Jane; the latter of whom ſhe embraced twice, and whiſpered, as if it were

the whiſpering of cherubim, a certainty of ſeeing, knowing, and loving her, where the ſociety of the good is eternal. Then as the overwhelmed Henry and John approached—ſhe exerted that fortitude, which the faith alone that inſpires it can beſtow.—"O, unutterably loved and honoured! this would be the moment of hopeleſs deſolation—the moment in which I ſhould quit my being in deſpair, could I ſuppoſe it was that which was to ſeparate me for ever from Henry."

She pauſed; and John, who had hitherto borne his agony well, by turns advancing and receding, and as often ſtanding aloof, or ſheltered from obſervation by the crowd, at length came forward.

"And thou, O pride and patron of all my happy days!" ſaid Olivia, extending her hand;—"thou art another cauſe, why I ſhould have hope in death—My little ones—bleſs, bleſs them, O God!—will have two parents—two—ah! I know not how many good beings will extend towards them a parent's love!—Can

they

they ever want a mother's care, while theſe kind, generous friends, and my dear abſent Caroline, remain on earth? Ah! my Henry! tell her, whom in dawning life I loved, that with my laſt remains of breath I bleſs her—and tell her too," continued ſhe, exerting herſelf to become diſtinct, "that did I not believe her affections were placed in a boſom too wiſe, too noble to ſuffer the external forms of devotion to prove an impediment, now prayer, and penitence, and death, have removed the more ſubſtantial obſtacle"—

Olivia looked at John, and then proceeded—"My ſpirit would not fly even to the regions of happineſs in perfect joy but for this, till I had bequeathed her to the father of my children—my deareſt, deareſt Henry."

A few minutes only prior to her diſſolution, her mind ſeemed to vibrate betwixt reaſon and delirium, during which ſhe ſupplicated that her dead infant might be brought to her. "Poor love! it can do me no harm now," ſaid ſhe. Her life in-

deed

deed was ebbing faſt away, and her phyſician deſired ſhe might be gratified in her requeſt. Accordingly her huſband brought the little Angelica, but ſtood with it at ſome diſtance, as if ſtill in fear of its infection, when Olivia perceived a complacent ſmile on her infant's face, and declared "that her dream was out—it has certainly a likeneſs of Henry," ſaid ſhe, "and it will be my guide to happineſs eternal—yes, my viſion is come to paſs. See—ſee John—the very lineaments of your brother—even as I told you;—the child ſhall convey its happy mother to heaven—already the crown of glory is encircling me, and now in the blazing ſapphire I read—'Bleſſed are the merciful!'—you know the reſt."

She uttered this with a mixture of wildneſs and coherence, ſhifting her looks, alternately, from the child to its father, and then to heaven. She beckoned Henry to come nearer.

"There can be no longer any thing to fear or hope," ſaid the phyſician: "indulge her." Henry advanced with the corpſe of

his lateſt born. The eyes of Olivia ſeemed to ſettle on both, as if from ſenſations of joy—then bending towards them, ſhe ſtretched forth her hands as to receive her child, ſoftly ſaying—"you will follow us;" and in the ſucceeding inſtant ſhe yielded up her innocent life in her huſband's arms.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

"Who by repentance is not ſatisfied,
"Is not of heaven nor earth."——

NEVER, perhaps, has there been, ſince the beginning of time, a death more ſerene, if we except the few wandering moments that preceded it, and even thoſe ſeemed to blend the ſlight ſigh of parting life, with a foretaſte of heavenly tranſport; never had there been a life more free from malady or woe; never has there been, nor ſhall there ever be, a death more generally, or more deſervedly,

deſervedly, lamented; although, perhaps, after a life ſo free from evil, and replete with good, it is a ſpecies of ſelf-love, even if it be not of ſinfulneſs, to grieve that ſuch a ſpirit is gone to enjoy the fulneſs of its recompenſe.

Humanity, however, long and poignantly bewailed its loſs; for not only kindred virtue, but every other that deigns to viſit mortals, were votaries at the ſhrine of Olivia Fitzorton. And amongſt thoſe votaries, none were more ſincere than Henry, who not only in the firſt impreſſions, but for many months after, ſeemed ſo abſtracted from himſelf, as to have not even a thought that divided him from the memory of her, to whoſe happineſs, for the greater part of his life, he had been a generous martyr.

But friendſhip, gratitude, pity, and all that incites to acts of juſtice founded on theſe, demand, that the ſacred ſorrows of John Fitzorton ſhould not be overlooked.

While the ſole being, who had ever truly touched his heart, was taking an eternal leave of him, and the world, not a tear was ſeen upon his cheek, not a ſigh was

heard from his bofom, and he was the firft to quit the chamber of death, when that being was no more. Henry, on the contrary, remained befide the body, with one arm ftill clafping his dead child, in defpite of all argument—long after Dr. Partington, and the apothecary, had in a manner forced every other perfon, even the faithful True George, out of the room; but when the phyfician demanded a conference with the Colonel on that fubject, John went back into the chamber, and by gentle, yet cogent, accents of perfuafion—and afking if he had determined to leave his furviving children without any parent, when they moft wanted a father's care? Henry fprung from the bed on which he had thrown himfelf betwixt his deceafed wife and babe, and fuffered himfelf to be conducted into his own apartment.

He had expreffed his defign to remain there for the reft of the night; but True George, who refolved to fit up with him, had by an inadvertent expreffion changed his purpofe. "Whendo they talk," quef-

tioned

tioned Henry, "of taking the remains of my wife and child from me?" "Alas to-morrow, your honour," anſwered the afflicted George, "becauſe as it is thought they died of ſomething that was catching, Dr. Partington and Mr. Burton ſay it will not be right for them to ſtay long in the caſtle—but, for my part, if it was not for your honour, and another perſon or two, I ſhould wiſh to catch the malady that I might die too! for I don't find any thing a perſon gets by living here in this world but ſeeing people one loves go, one after another, out of it."

Henry, who had not taken off his cloaths, ſcarcely ſtaid long enough to hear the whole of George's reflections, but attending chiefly to the information which preceded them—he declared his wiſh to take his laſt leave of the remains of Olivia, and her little one—"and there can be no opportunity ſo favourable as the moment before us," ſaid he: Henry went into Olivia's chamber attended by George, whom, however, he beckoned to ſtop at the door, which being

partly opened, Henry moved forward with cautious and trembling ſteps, as if fearful of diſturbing thoſe who were in the ſleep of death. As he was approaching the bed, he beheld John bending over it on the ſide he had himſelf entered. Checked by ſurpriſe and awe, he ſuſpended his ſtep, and diſtinctly heard the words which his brother was uttering.

They breathed over the dead body of Olivia the firſt declaration of love. They recapitulated the conduct which that love had urged, to preſerve the peace of its object unbroken to the laſt moment of her life. "And if, O! ſacred ſpirit," ſaid the lover, addreſſing the corpſe, of which he had taken up one of the lifeleſs hands, and laid it on his boſom—"if in the unencouraged but reſiſtleſs feelings, a ſentiment more tender than brother ever felt—perhaps ever can feel,—has ſometimes aſſailed my heart, and aught of blame ſhould ſtill attach, to eternally combated, and involuntary emotion, let thy now angel prayers intercede with the beſtower of that heart

to

to abſolve my frailty! yet how can errour mix with a principle which at this moment that I am beholding thee a breathleſs corpſe haſtening to decay, making that corpſe more welcome to my eye, more precious to my ſoul, than all thou haſt left behind thee to bloom in health, and youth, and beauty? Ah, no! like the ſoul itſelf my affection ſhall be eternal, attend me as in thy life time here, and follow thee to other worlds."

John had turned his head, ſomewhat ſtartled; for Henry, impelled by his feelings, came onward. The Colonel had ſtill retained one of Olivia's hands. "Henry," ſaid he, "you have diſcovered my paſſion: you now perceive that a wretch, more diſaſtrous than yourſelf, had really being.— Behold the victim! behold too the object of his affection. But ſhe is no more thy wife, my brother: death hath diſſolved the bond that made her fond and faithful hand appropriate to Henry. Alas! it is mouldring into nought. The aſcended ſpirit, therefore, which has left it, is now our

object—that too is free of human ties except by heavenly ſympathy; and thoſe who ſtill love her muſt ſhare with myriads, with all the hoſt of heaven."

The brothers tenderly embraced. John preſſed Olivia's hand yet more fondly, and gently replacing it by her ſide, withdrew from the bed to the window, turning his eyes on the body as he walked from it. He lingered a moment, paſſed the chamber, and diſappeared, then re-entered—receded again, and again advanced. Henry kneeled down by the ſide of the bed, and careſſed by turns Olivia and Angelica, then put one of the infant's arms within the claſp of its mother's in the poſition he had found it. "Forgive me! angel ſoul of her," ſaid he, "who once gave almoſt matchleſs beauty to this lifeleſs form—O! forgive me, if I was leſs ſenſible to thoſe wondrous graces than they deſerved! thou now art, haply, conſcious of the motive, and will pardon what conſtancy to former vows, and unconquerable love of their object alone could cauſe. Had thoſe vows been thine, the boaſted

boaſted beauties of the earth—the earth itſelf would have wanted power to draw me deliberately from thee."

John, who had a ſecond time returned, heard in turn this declaration, and when it was cloſed ran haſtily to his brother, preſſed him with the utmoſt affection to his boſom, and wept. They left the ſacred chamber together, turning at every ſtep, but when John had ordered the attendants, who were waiting without, to return into Olivia's apartment to watch the bodies, and had conducted Henry into his own chamber, at the door of which the unwearied George was waiting his maſter's return—" Brother," ſaid he, " I feel an aſſurance, not of this world, that our prayers are heard, our penitence accepted! for the reſt our weakneſs muſt have way—and our pillow may be ſteeped in the tears of our frailty, becauſe we are ſtill of the earth—but happy as was our Olivia, how faint, how feeble, the moſt diſtinguiſhed moments of that felicity to the bliſs ſhe now enjoys! Let us part in peace. If John Fitzorton can reconcile himſelf to

her loſs it ought to be ſupportable to Henry."

On the evening, however, of the ſucceeding day Henry ſhewed ſigns of the diſorder we have alluded to, and Dr. Partington's brother, the phyſician, as well as the good apothecary, determined it to be the reſult of incautious attendance in Olivia's apartment. John, and the reſt of the family, and its friends, eſcaped, but the more irritable Henry caught the malady, and was its prey for ſeveral months—during which not one of his friends of the Abbey, Bury, or Caſtle, could be perſuaded by any warnings of danger to leave him. He remained almoſt a year with alternations of weakneſs and ſtrength, and when his body might be called convaleſcent his mind appeared ſtill to ſuffer from an incurable wound. Charles Stuart, the almoſt conſtant attendant of his pillow, obſerved this, and imparted it to the Colonel, who, watching by his bedſide a favourable interval, kindly took his hand, and thus addreſſed him:—

"I have attended with pleaſure, my dear Henry, to the progreſs of your returning health; but that pleaſure has been, and is ſtill, checked by what I have obſerved—a ſolicitude—a miſery, not the effect of the weakneſs which mere illneſs leaves behind, ſtill bends you to the earth. My brother, we are left to the ſupport and conſolation of each other; confide to me the cauſe, and let me ſee if it cannot be removed—perhaps the incapacitating powers of a ſevere and tedious malady have too long robbed you of the ſolace of your accuſtomed employments—infirmity doth ſtill neglect all office: from the ſick pillow, even the muſe will take her flight—the friend and inſpirer of our gayer hours, and of our youthful enthuſiaſms, our play of fancy, and our flow of ſpirit—yes, ſhe, like other faithleſs miſtreſſes, often leaves her votaries when they can no longer adminiſter to her vanity, or ſoothe her with melodious adulations. I ſay not this in mockery of her art; for I have long ceaſed to attack even the vulnerable parts of her magick, ſince the day that

 I ſaw

I ſaw my brother wounded in ſpirit, beyond the reach of ſportive ridicule or ſerious remonſtrance—ſince I ſaw that he was not ſimply the victim of that dire ſyſtem of ſentimental inſanity, which men of feveriſh imaginations have oppoſed to the fortitude of human beings, and the duty of chriſtians—ſince I noted his reſolution to drink of the bitter cup that 'might not paſs from him;'—earneſt to turn to pious advantage the trials of Providence, and relinquiſh the thought of ſpurning its diſpenſations by flying into the preſence of the power who appointed them, I have forborne to take from any thing, that might be encouraged, its power of diverting you—but ſomething more important than ſcience or ſong now calls upon my Henry's powers. He has a heart to feel that one real charity ſhewn to the loweſt of the ſons of men, in the moſt deſolate corner of the earth, though it were but to carry into a hut the comfort of a ſingle morſel, when that morſel was wanted and deſerved, returns to the reſtorer a tranſport more ſincere, and preſents to him an image

image more refplendent, than all the pictures of bounty which the elect of Apollo ever painted, or, fhall I fay, that realizes the painting and poefy of the moft happy and benevolent mufe, whofe beft fount of fufpiration is a generous heart; the cottages, and the cottagers of our now angel friend—we fhould learn to fpeak of her as we do of heaven itfelf—with chaftened pleafure—yet devoid of grief," continued John, fighing—" I fay, my brother, thefe cottagers—and, perhaps, more than thefe—are devolved on you—it would gladden your heart to hear their daily, hourly, enquiries—to fee the confirmations of their grateful love—and a continuance of all their joys fhall again be yours."

" My dear, deareft brother!" exclaimed Henry, embracing him.—" But even the exercife of bounty," continued John, " rich as it is in happinefs, cannot wholly occupy an active mind. Short as life is, it will be found too long for every man who wants employment proportioned to his powers. How fhall I again bring forward what has

ſo often been unſucceſsfully propoſed to you? how ſhall I remind you that—while you have generouſly obeyed our bleſſed father in, perhaps, a hard command, you ſtill are diſobedient in regard to another not ſo rigorous?" "I obeyed him according to my promiſe," anſwered Henry, "in all that was poſſible; I reſiſted only that which, even, at the time of the command, was beyond the reach of my obedience—elſe, ſo aweful was the moment, at which I received his laſt commands, and ſo little power had I to advert to myſelf when I beheld him leaving me for ever, that had a thouſand more ſacrifices been exacted, I ſhould have promiſed to become the victim of them all." "I do not comprehend you," ſaid John.—"It could not be beyond your power to enter into that profeſſion for which you had been deſigned; and although we all obſerved a negligence in your preparations, I have, for my own part, always imputed it to your former perplexed ſituation, and a too vigorous purſuit of other ſtudies. There was, indeed, a time

time when I could not but think your devotion to the muſe interrupted devotion of a higher kind." "Never! God forbid!" anſwered Henry. "I truſt," reſumed John, "you did not withdraw from the ſacred path in which your father walked with ſo much honour, to compliment the faith of any other perſon, however dear the object."

Henry ſprung up in his bed, withdrawing his hand with ſome force from the claſp of his brother. "Compliment away my faith! fie, fie!—no, ſir!—no, John!" ſaid he,—"nor would the object to whom you alluded have accepted—ſhe would have ſpurned the compliment—ſcorned the man who could inſult her with the offer." John was extremely moved. "Forgive dear Henry, forgive me," ſaid he; "my harſh qualities you perceive are not yet all ſubdued. Let us proceed like brothers; you know the reaſons which have cloſed my lips on ſubjects that I knew were of deep concern to you: but I did not cloſe my eyes. I have not paſſed over Caroline Stuart,

amongſt

amongſt unheeded things. I have obſerved her in the hours of varied trial, of hard temptation—I have noticed her often willing to yield her life, but never to ſwerve from any of its duties—I have beheld that life ſinking gradually away, againſt all her exerted powers to preſerve it, becauſe its preſervation was the command of God; even while, for herſelf, exiſtence wanted every comfort of health, and every relief of hope—when, indeed, ſhe repelled hope, becauſe it was errour to harbour, and crime to encourage it." The Colonel perceiving his brother much agitated, beſeeched him to hear what he had farther to offer with patience. "In a thouſand points, my Henry," continued he, "this has been the victim which has ſurpaſſed us all in ſuffering, and in ſuffering well; and I have, for ſome time, ceaſed to wonder at your attachment, taking into conſideration the early impreſſion by which it was formed: but it was againſt all order, all rectitude, all ſacred laws that I ſhould tell you ſo before."

Here, embracing Henry, he proceeded to inform him how he had contemplated

this

this ſubject—"Thus have I argued," ſaid John, "I have not been unfaithful even to my ſecond impreſſions, why ſhould my brother be inconſtant to his firſt? and what has a difference of religious belief to do with religion itſelf? when I thought oppoſitely to this, did I not think narrowly? did I not think wrong? have I not ſince found the eſſence of devotion the ſame in the catholick father Arthur, and the proteſtant Sir Armine? and was not the latter heavily miſtaken in this objection? ſurely, had this been the only one it might have yielded to the diſcuſſions of reaſon and truth. But there were, alas, ſo many others—and ſome ſo horrible"——

"O, my ever generous and good protector," interrupted Henry, "it has been my fate through life to be entangled in the mazes of involuntary ſecrets, inevitable myſteries; another is yet behind, and that had been ſhut up for ever in the few hearts to which it has been confided, had the cauſe continued which made it at firſt, and for ſo many years continued it a private concern

to

to that heart alone. We have all of us had, perhaps, in ſome points, too little domeſtick confidence. The ſecrets of our family have been alſo ſecrets to ourſelves, and exacted from us by events. Reſerves beget reſerve: though in our perplexed ſtate of general counteraction, the moſt unbounded confidence would have little availed. No, I did not compliment away my religion, but the faith of her I loved—became MINE."

"Brother!" ejaculated John. "Mine," reſumed Henry, "on contemplation—on choice,—I adopted it in the very conviction of my heart—I obſerved it operate on the age of father Arthur—on the youth of Caroline—and, although, I ſaw the ſame ſpirit, differing in a few ceremonials, influence the no leſs pious life of my venerable father, and ſhed grace divine on the conduct of Olivia—I was affected even by the forms which the proteſtant church rejects, and on the day that Caroline Stuart heard my vows of love, I made with my own heart thoſe vows which even to this day ſhe has not heard, that our religion ſhould be one.

Hence

Hence my long poſtponement—againſt all remonſtrance--during the life-time of my father, of carrying into effect one part of his plan for me, although I did not deem it right—when I found communication would only have embittered the remains of his life —to betray my ſecret.

"Then you are catholick," ſaid John, "and by whom may you have been proſelited?" "By no one," anſwered Henry. "To one alone I imparted my feelings." "Father Arthur, I preſume," exclaimed John, ſcornfully. "I am eager for his reply." "It was brief," cried Henry. "He told me it would violate the ſanctity of his own belief in things moſt holy, were he to diſſuade; and it would trench on his conduct as a neighbour, and a friend of Sir Armine Fitzorton, a diſtinguiſhed member of the church of England, to countenance what I had confided: 'Your confidence in me is ſafe,' ſaid he, 'but I can give no council." "I had my fears," cried John. "I am glad I wronged him." "O, if you thought him acceſſary to my reſolves, you did,

did, indeed, wrong him," anſwered Henry.—" I urged him to tell me if he thought I was proceeding in the right path?" 'I truſt in God we are all doing ſo,' he anſwered. I importuned him to admit me to his chapel at his hours of prayer. 'You preſs me hardly, youth,' ſaid he. 'I will not invite: I dare not exclude. The temple in which your pious father adores the Almighty, would not be ſhut againſt a catholick ſupplicant, who might wiſh to enter. Can I cloſe the door of mine upon a proteſtant votary?"

"Noble Arthur! then you are not in verity a papiſt?" queſtioned John.

"In verity?" anſwered Henry, "what call you truth? Is it not from within? What mean you by vows? Do the words and external ſigns, by which they are expreſſed, make them bonds, or give them ſanctity?"

Henry took from under his pillow a crucifix, and then reſumed his queſtions.

"Derive thoſe vows any hallowed potency from this frail image of him, to whoſe real

real effence they were offered? Are they not all confecrated by the heart? As I was not abfolutely banifhed from the chapel I attended, though, I am afhamed to fay, by ftealth, both its matin and vefper duties. The monk one day demanded, If I had yet confulted with Sir Armine? I owned that I knew his fteadinefs of faith too well to dare communicate. 'I dare,' anfwered the monk. But on my promifing, that before I again joined his congregation in that way, my father's confent fhould be attained, or I would bring proof it fhould be no longer expedient to folicit it: he was filent on the fubject. I withdrew, however, from all publick forms, and communed only with myfelf. My nuptials, no longer to be poftponed, and impoffible to be prevented, took place. I yielded up every thing in that hour—that moment—but what I could not change—my love and my religion. Thofe were in the fanctuary of my own heart. Excufe, brother, this prolixity: the occafion claims it—and it unfolds to you a thoufand myfteries in my conduct. Refpect my fincerity,

ſincerity, ſhould you blame my election: I am no example to others, but I am true to my own belief."

"God knows," replied John, "which of us is moſt in the right: but it is clear to me, that, although I give you full credit for your feelings—and pity from my ſoul all you muſt have ſuffered to conceal them, it appears very clear, that had Caroline Stuart been a proteſtant, you would never have been a catholick. We will not, however, diſcuſs the point farther; for I am brought round to what I at firſt propoſed to mention, by a very circuitous way. It has pleaſed the Omnipotent, my brother, to remove many apparently inſuperable impediments; and the moſt inauſpicious paſſion that, perhaps, the human heart ever ſet out with, as its only hope in the morning of life, has riſen above ſeveral of the darkeſt clouds in the noon of your days. There is every reaſon to believe a renewal of your affections, now they may be innocently offered, would not be unacceptable to her, for whom, doubtleſs, your love

can

can eaſily be revived!"—"Revived!" exclaimed Henry.

"I will have one of my ſolitary thinkings on this matter," reſumed John ſmiling, but his face pallid, and care upon his brow. "Meantime be aſſured that I ſhall not allow you to ſuffer any pain, or forego any pleaſure, when it is conſiſtent, and within my power to prevent the one and promote the other."

By ſuch means was Henry relieved from the laſt, and one of the moſt burthenſome myſteries that had ever hung upon his heart; and thus too, were again opened proſpects, on which he had not even dared to caſt his eyes, or voluntarily fix his thoughts, for many years.

It was amongſt his brother John's maxims, never to hint a promiſe without good likelihood of its being in his power to perform it, and as the reſult of his meditation on the above ſubject, was a belief that Henry Fitzorton and Caroline Stuart, after all their ſacrifices and ſufferings, deſerved to come together; and as their union, no

longer

longer ſeemed to oppoſe any other duty, could not, he hoped, be offenſive even to the ſpirits of his father, or of Olivia, which, if conſcious of the projecting deſign, were conſcious alſo, of the long reverence ſhewn to, and, at length, the honourable removal of, every former barrier. As the laſt balm, therefore, which could be poured over his own wounds, John ſet on foot a treaty, with the aſſiſtance of the Lieutenant, that might at length heal thoſe of his brother and friend.

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

### HOPE RESUMED.

IN purſuance of this plan, he wrote to father Arthur a letter, of which Charles Stuart himſelf promiſed to be the bearer:

'MY DEAR AND REVEREND SIR,

'The important—I will not, ſince they 'were the deſignations of heaven, call 'them

'them unfortunate events, which have happened in our family ſince your departure, 'have, probably been deſcribed to you 'by our Johanna, or ſome other of our 'friends: they will be more particularly 'detailed by the friendly bearer of this 'letter; which is to tell you that I no 'longer ſee any reaſon to prevent Henry 'Fitzorton and Caroline Stuart from becoming man and wife; nor have I now 'any objection to their being united, according to the forms and ceremonies of 'the catholick church. This declaration 'will ſerve to ſhew that I am in the confidence both of the love and religion of 'my brother, and chaſtened as both have 'been, by almoſt every ſpecies of trial, 'from the ſacred hand of God himſelf, 'I ſhall no more preſume to oppoſe myſelf 'to either: and in doing this, notwithſtanding all paſt horrors, I humbly truſt 'that I ſhall offend neither the living 'nor the dead. Implacability is inconſiſtent with divine natures; and if penitence 'can receive pardon from God, it ſhould 'ſurely

'surely be sufficient to the forgiveness of 'men made angels: and thatthe recompense 'we are preparing for long-suffering worth, 'will be pleasing to the spirits of peace. 'The reward which is now preparing for 'the happiness of those whose hearts have 'been proved, must owe much to your 'manner of representing to Miss Stuart, the 'several mysterious truths — mysterious, 'alas! to mortals—but of easy process to 'that heavenly director, who conducts the 'apparently irreconcilable interests of un-'numbered worlds. To your wisdom and 'loving-kindness, I submit the furtherance 'of the measure proposed. Our worthy 'Charles will readily be your auxiliary; 'and he is, moreover, charged with some 'proposed arrangements, as well regarding 'his own plans of establishment, as that of 'his friends.

'Venerable and respectable man,

'Farewell.'

The generous writer of this epistle looked upon the object it was intended to accom-plish,

pliſh, as ſo nearly a good obtained, that he could not withhold its contents from Henry, becauſe they would, in effect, convey his own ſentiments, while they ſanctioned thoſe of his brother. The Lieutenant was, therefore, diſpatched to Henry's room; and after the two friends had conferred, no time was loſt in preparations, or in performance of the journey. True George, now ſeeing his maſter make rapid advances towards health, ſupplicated to be the Lieutenant's attendant, and the next morning they ſet out.

But while the houſe of Fitzorton had been, alternately, the reſidence of hope and fear, and every extreme of ſorrow and of joy; in the refuge of Arthur—in an obſcure nook of the world—the moſt ſerious and important events had taken place. Alas! where is that corner of the globe exempt from changes of which the globe itſelf is the victim?

On the arrival of the Lieutenant and True George at the iſland receſs, to which they paſſed immediately from Dartmouth,

neither Arthur nor Caroline were to be found. The landlord had taken poſſeſſion of his houſe; and from him, our aſtoniſhed travellers underſtood that "his reverence, and the family, had left the iſland finally, about ſix weeks ago. That the Lady Caroline had departed a month before, but that the monk came to fetch his young black, and his old ſteward, and the little old dog, they all made ſo much of; and to give up the houſe, paying, however, the rent to the uttermoſt farthing." "And whither are they gone?" queſtioned the Lieutenant.—"Why, your honour," anſwered the landlord, taking a ſlip of paper from his pocket-book, this is the place, where I was, as occaſion ſerved, to ſend letters; but though all them, pointing to a pacquet in the parlour window, have arrived, no opportunity of forwarding them has happened ſince his reverence went laſt away." The Lieutenant now ſaw letters in the characters of Mrs. Herbert and Johanna, and read with increaſed amazement, the following addreſs, in the monk's own hand-writing:

'Pere

'Pere Arthur, maiſon de poſte a Coutance, Bas Normandie.' While Charles was reflecting what could poſſibly be the motive that directed them to that part of the world, and without having confided in any of their mutual friends, or in himſelf as a brother, a letter, which had juſt come in by the Engliſh packet, was delivered to him containing theſe words:

'MY DEAR FRIEND,

'The encloſed reached the caſtle within 'an hour after you had left it. It is mani- 'feſtly the hand-writing of father Arthur; 'but the foreign poſt marks, and the route 'by which it appears to have come, has 'puzzled us. 'Farewell.

'John Fitzorton.

'The word *diſpatch* was written in the poſtſcript by Henry.'

The encloſure alluded to conveyed intelligence which required diſpatch indeed. It informed the Lieutenant of a circumſtance the very date of which ſhook his whole

 frame

frame on the firſt glance, and when he had haſtily put it under a cover for the caſtle, to go by the returning mail, he enquired on the quay after the poſſible means of getting to the coaſt of France? A veſſel which had come in a few days before from St. Malo's, was to return by way of Coutance when the wind would permit, but it was not till after waiting ten days—ten fatal days—in the moſt anxious ſuſpenſe, that the veſſel could get out of the harbour; a favourable breeze, however, at length, ſprung up, and they got to ſea, and the gale increaſing, they gained the long deſired port.

The moment after Charles and his attendant had reached the land, they deſired one of the porters whom they ſaw on the beach, to conduct them to the Poſt-office in the direction, which correſponded with what was given in the letter, and after a few minutes' walking they came to the Priory-houſe, where they found the ſtill blameleſs Prieſt with his Indian, and old Denniſon ſitting beſide him. "My ſon," ſaid

ſaid father Arthur, " I expected you would follow our letter, and I am glad at heart to find by your appearing amongſt us, it has been received." " I will not," obſerved the agitated Charles, " I come not, to queſtion your judgment or your wiſdom,— I come only to aſk, why you have withheld from me a circumſtance, or any previous knowledge, on which the happineſs of a ſiſter, and perhaps the life of my boſom-friend entirely depend? But there is no time for words: let me implore you by whatever is moſt holy, to ſtop your raſh proceedings!"—" What you call raſhneſs," exclaimed Arthur, " is in itſelf moſt holy, and temerity would conſiſt in the conduct you recommend. I thought your ſiſter had ſtated her duty, yours, and my own, in the letter which you acknowledge to have received,—ſhe there told you under what authority I acted,—I am ſorry to find you diſpute it."—" Talk not to me of authorities, Sir!" demanded the Lieutenant, yielding to the impetuoſity of his character, and forgetting for a moment to whom he ſpoke—

 " Where

"Where is my ſiſter?"—"She is under my protection," replied Arthur.—"I thought, Sir, I was her only natural protector!" reſumed Charles: "under whom could ſhe be more ſecure?"—"Under his whom ſhe has ſought," returned the Monk, "under that of her God. Slightly muſt you have peruſed what either ſhe or I have written, or elſe you would bluſh, would tremble to aſk that queſtion."

"How could I hear of my ſiſter's having clandeſtinely, and by your connivance, ſhut herſelf up within the walls of a cloyſter?—from thence was her cruel letter dated. I had not patience to read the dire particulars;—at ſuch a moment too,—miſguided girl! when, but for this abhorred ſecluſion, we might all have been happy."—"I underſtand you not," ſaid Arthur, "what moment, and what happineſs? I aſſert, young man, that had you paid due reſpect to my greeting, it would have made known to you the aweful calls upon me, to accompany your ſiſter from the place of her former refuge to one yet more ſacred; you would there have

have been taught to pay more reſpect to her motives of devoting herſelf, and to mine in conducting her to the cloyſter; but there ſhe muſt remain. I know my duty, and will maintain it."

The door of the houſe had been left unclosed on entrance of the Lieutenant, while the father, with an expoſtulating, determined, and ſomewhat of a rebuking voice, was pronouncing the laſt ſentence, another voice, which was in an inſtant known to be that of Henry Fitzorton, ejaculated—"Cloyſter!"—"O, holy man!" interpoſed a third voice, which proceeded from the Colonel, "thoſe motives are reſpected,—reſpected even by this, my poor diſeaſed, diſtracted brother, even though he is, alas! their ſacrifice."—"Cloyſter! Is ſhe then already entombed?" reiterated Henry, who now fell into the arms of True George, while Denniſon and Floreſco, Charles, the Colonel and the Apothecary, and father Arthur, haſted to his relief. "Alas!" ſaid the Colonel, "from your anxiety, Charles, to convey the tidings of Caroline's deſtiny,

to your friends at Fitzorton, you directed your pacquet to Henry inftead of John, and all was abruptly difcovered; my poor brother was then ftruggling with the remnant of his diforder, but perfifted on taking an immediate journey and voyage to this place; and in relief of his defpair, we have all followed. Alas! his prefent fituation too plainly proves our efforts have been vain." —"My dear mafter revives," cried True George, interrupting John's relation.— "She is loft then!" faid Henry, "even in the moment when miracles appeared to have been wrought to fave us both!" His paroxyfm now returned, and at the inftance of Mr. Burton he was conducted by the attendants to Dennifon's own bed, while the afflicted Colonel proceeded to inform Arthur, that no entreaties could diffuade his brother Henry from coming over, that he was even frantick at oppofition, protefting that if he arrived too late, his death near the wall where Caroline had fhut herfelf eternally from him, would be his whole wifh, and if he was profperous in his journey,

ney, that profperity would be his cure. "There was no reafoning with an infane, who fet his life at naught," faid the Colonel, "I faw him defperate, and to avoid fomething more immediately fatal, I was engaged by our good apothecary's counfel in an act of defperation. We hurried to the proper port, where finding no veffel deftined for France, we hired a fifhing-boat, and like defpairing adventurers, we trufted ourfelves to a troubled fea under no one aufpice of happy fortune, but that the wind, though turbulent, was fair:—and we are come fafe,—alas! to what end?—Caroline is in her cell!"—"It is indeed true," anfwered the wondering Arthur, "Caroline has devoted herfelf, and when fhe entered her convent, I did not think, Sir, that any poffible event of this world would make me heave a figh at what fhe has felt it right to do; and, although I grieve, even from my utmoft foul, that my ever-refpected Henry fhould be thus wrought upon—the whole mafs of things I fee and hear, with refpect to his happinefs

P 6 with

with Caroline Stuart,—your countenance of that connexion,—the intemperate,—I had almoſt ſaid, the indecent rage of the Lieutenant, are ſo ſtrange, new, inconſiſtent, and apparently impoſſible, that a more extraordinary myſtery than has ever yet involved us, is now before my eyes."

"Our letters muſt ſurely have informed you," ſaid John.

"I have received ſome from the caſtle," interpoſed the monk, "and ſo has the devoted Caroline; but when her reſolution was once formed, I deemed it prudent, not to intrude upon her any thing of a nature too intereſting in regard to the world, of which ſhe deſired to take an eternal leave, ſo that for many of the paſt months, we are both utterly ignorant of every occurrence which may have taken place either at the abbey or the caſtle."—"Gracious heaven!" exclaimed John,—"then you know not, perhaps, that Olivia———"

The Lieutenant came into the room ſaying, his friend was more compoſed, and

wiſhed

wiſhed earneſtly to confer with father Arthur in his chamber; "but I cannot," ſaid Charles, "ſuffer him to depart until I have thus in the humbleſt manner ſupplicated forgiveneſs for my late ungoverned rage." "That rage has chaſtiſed itſelf," ſaid the holy man," ſtretching forth his hands to receive the folded ones of Charles; "ſhall not a loving father forgive his child an offence which ſorrow and affection cauſed?" They embraced, and the Lieutenant delivered the letters he had brought from the receſs. "Oh! had I received theſe, and read ſome former ones ſooner," obſerved Arthur, ſighing, "ſomething might have been avoided. Still all is myſtery. Return to your ſuffering friend, my child, and tell him I will peruſe my letters, and attend him. It were wicked to deceive, and therefore touch not the theme that may lead him to deluſion. I crave your promiſe, Colonel, ſomewhat longer, to guide me through a labyrinth to whoſe mazes I have yet no clue." "I will but accompany the Lieutenant into my brother's

room

room and return," ſaid the Colonel. But the papers delivered, ſoon dilated the train of incidents. The myſteries were explained, but the regrets were multiplied. John Fitzorton came back. "Alas!" ſaid Arthur, "what combination has been formed againſt us! or rather, my friend, how ſhort is the foreſight, how frail the wiſdom of mortals to pronounce what is moſt for their happineſs! I ſigh, ſir; mine eyes have wept at what I have already ſeen,—my heart ſwells while I ſpeak, yet I know not how I may offend the all-diſpoſer, by thus lamenting his heavenly will;—ah! who ſhall dare to ſay that the ſeemingly agonizing turns of life, the heavieſt deprivations of death, the early aſcenſion of Olivia to heaven, and the eternal retirement of Caroline from the world, are not bleſſings at which we ſhould rejoice, and at which it is impious to repine?"

Henry had deſired True George, and the Lieutenant, to lead him to Arthur immediately on the colonel's leaving the room, ſo that he came into the parlour time enough

to

to hear great part of what the holy father had ſaid. He attempted not to controvert the reaſoning; he diſputed not the piety of the reflections, but faint, weak, and deſpairing, he implored Arthur to ſave him if it were yet within his power—"And if it be not," exclaimed the unfortunate, "I have a thought which I hope, without outrage to God or man, I may indulge—'tis my only alternative: yet it ſhall be done. Father I am reſolved."

This was uttered betwixt wildneſs, and collected ſolemnity, but the effect was aweful. "Hear me with fortitude and patience," ſaid Arthur, addreſſing himſelf to Henry, after a profound pauſe—"all that I can I will. There is but one being whom I would ſerve and obey with more willingneſs than Henry Fitzorton. The meek and pious Caroline Stuart, for the reaſons ſhe has aſſigned, has withdrawn herſelf from the world: ſhe has nearly performed her novitiate. Her year of probation expires on the morrow." "The morrow!" exclaimed Henry—"Even ſo my child—we

are

are in the eve of everlafting feclufion," faid Arthur. "O God!" cried Henry—"She has already fignified her folemn intention to take the veil, and is upon the point of pronouncing her vows." Henry could fcarcely be held from finking to the ground, though Dennifon and Florefco were affifting True George to fupport him: for the Lieutenant was hardly able to fuftain himfelf; and John was unufually difturbed. "This night, however, at the twelfth hour I am to meet her in the confeffional after midnight prayers: I have here a copy of her profeffion of faith. Indulge not thefe falfe hopes: fhould fhe ftand folemnly fixed to her purpofe, I will not, dare not, interrupt it." Henry chilled with horror. "But there are yet fome hours betwixt the preparation and the act," faid the monk: "the choice of becoming a reclufe, or of returning to the world is ftill left her; and although it is unufually late to place even in the view of a devotee any temporal fcenes or objects, that may lead her back to fublunary feelings—and ftill more uncommon

for

for her confeſſor to bring them under her eyes, I ſtill hold it innocent to let her know that great and extraordinary events have taken place at Fitzorton caſtle.—Nay, I will offer her the peruſal of her benefactor the Colonel's letter, and then leave her ſpirit free to act upon the whole of the circumſtances. It is a caſe of affliction and of love, my children, apart from all others I have known, and I will ſhew it peculiar indulgence. But I muſt inhibit all effuſions of paſſion, and expect you will all remain unobſerved, and undiſcovered, in this houſe, which I have borrowed of my ancient friend, the abbot of the priory. Yet remember Caroline Stuart has, for twelve hard-tried months, conformed to an order not lenient, though not rigorous: ſhe is preparing to embrace yet more auſterities. She is even now to be looked upon as a being nearly out of the pale of terreſtrial things. I muſt not have her ſenſibility ſeduced. One ſtrong and deciding queſtion ſhall be put to her, even in this the moſt holy, and aweful moment of her life; if

ſhe

ſhe anſwers in favour of the world, ſhe ſhall receive no diſcountenance; if ſhe has ſo ſettled her ſtedfaſt ſoul that all earthly objects—even thoſe once moſt precious—have receded from her—and ſuch inſtances are not rare—even in the reign of beauty and of youth I have ſeen them fade away, and become extinguiſhed—ſhould that be the caſe with the devoted Caroline, not one perſuaſive word ſhall be uſed by me to over-rule her election. I can no more; my love, my gratitude, and my compaſſion, will have done their utmoſt."

"Hark!" exclaimed Arthur, "that is the clock of her convent. It is only a few paces diſtant from this houſe, a door of the priory opens on it. Liſten. It is the twelfth hour—I muſt obey its ſummons. Caroline is exact."

The ſounds entered the ſoul of every hearer—and the pious man, after aſſuring his friends he would return to them with a faithful report, and exhorting them to believe, that whatever direction it might take would be ultimately the beſt, he commended

mended their ſpirits to the angel of peace, and paſſing from the abbot's houſe into the priory, entered the convent of viſitation where Caroline was encloſed.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE PROGRESS OF SUSPENSE.

THE terrors of ſuſpenſe have been juſtly numbered amongſt the leaſt ſupportable of the miſeries of life. Never could they have been felt more acutely than they were by the ſorrowful ſociety which now filled the houſe which Arthur had borrowed of his epiſcopal friend. Nor could any member of that ſociety offer ſubſtantial conſolation to the other. The aged Denniſon knew that Caroline, had ſhe not been his attendant, nay his nurſe, during a ſickneſs which he himſelf had ſuffered, would have ſecluded herſelf ſome weeks ſooner: Flo-

reſco's

refco's honeft nature could only lead him, in this inftance, to filent prayer—for he had liftened to his mafter's words, which funk into his heart as the words of him whofe law they expounded: the apothecary and John Fitzorton were too well acquainted with the conftancy of Caroline Stuart to ground a reafonable hope, or, indeed, almoft to fuffer any hope, that her confeffor would reprefent the change of affairs, with fuch moving circumftances, as to warrant any change in his devotee. The Lieutenant was filent, and abafhed, from a fenfe of his own former irreverent behaviour:—and Henry, who had long fince believed no incident of the future could exceed, or even equal, the paft in that ficknefs of conjecture and of dread, which uncertainty occafions, now found that the interval betwixt the departure and the return of the confeffor from the convent of the confeffed, was the moft tremendous point of time in his life. The folemn paufe was varioufly filled up by the expectants. The Colonel retired to a remote corner of the room, covered his eyes with

with his hands, and, except now and then ſtarting up to preſs the hand of his brother, remained fixed in thought. Denniſon and Floreſco, ſomewhat relieved themſelves by aſſiſting the ſervant of the houſe to prepare refreſhments. Henry walked backwards and forwards, or ſat abruptly down—now uplifted, and now wrung his hands—but when the table was covered, and he had taken a chair near it to reſt upon one of his arms, he heard a feeble ſound, yet rather of joy than ſadneſs, come from under the table, and in the next inſtant he felt the tongue of the animal, from whom the ſound had iſſued, licking his hand. "Is it poſſible," exclaimed Henry, ſtarting up, that I ſhould again embrace thee, little Fitz? art thou ſtill alive!—O welcome, welcome! be it a good omen!"

"Yes, him's is alive, poor ickle ting," ſaid Floreſco,—"him's only come from miſſey's convent the other day—ſee—good Sir Squire, that is him's ickle bed—all ſatin, and cotton, and wool, as ſoft as him's own ickle old head—do but feel him's; and, lookee,

lookee, Sir Squire, him's bed is made by him's lady's—own lady—and him's was brought here in it by maſter, our good, good father Arthur, under him's cloak."

As Floreſco brought forward a light to inſpect the ſpaniel's bed, Henry knew it to be the ſame which he had ſeen in early days—a device of the dove and the olive, emblems of love and peace, and the initial letters H and C, twined, and yet cautiouſly involved in well-wrought laurel leaves, had, at once, noted and concealed their true hearts' myſtery. Henry held the candle cloſe to examine—"Alas! they are almoſt worn out! See brother—ſee my good old Denniſon, the initials are divided—the H is faintly ſhadowed. Look, it hangs only by a few trembling threads—even like the hope—the life—of him whom it repreſents—and the once enwreathed C, is gone for ever! Behold! not a trace remains. And why, poor Fitz, wert thou brought hither? Surely, thou wouldeſt have been a ſolace—even a dear companion of thy cloyſtered miſtreſs."—"Alas! for that very reaſon," ſaid Denniſon,

niſon, "was he reſigned! He too much reminded her of the world—ſhe had made it her duty to forget; and ſhe knew he would here both live and die in peace." Henry was too much affected by the motive of ſending the dog out of the convent to attend to any thing more on that ſubject; but another drew all his attention. Denniſon had diſappeared at the end of his laſt ſpeech, but returned in a few minutes bringing under his arm a ſmall box, on which were written the words—'*Things precious*.' "This, my good and dear maſters, contains what I would it were poſſible to return to her who has depoſited them; but ſhould the great and good director of all determine otherwiſe, they are to be diſpoſed of according to my Lady Caroline's written requeſts within." Henry eagerly, yet fearfully opened the lid—and as well as agitation, too big for words, would permit, he inſpected the contents; ſome of which—for all were ſeparate and appropriated—were directed to her brother, amongſt theſe were the miniature gifts of her mother, mentioned in a former part of

this hiſtory, and ſome other reliques of her family. Some were addreſſed to Mrs. Herbert, ſome to Johanna—ſome to Olivia, others to Arthur, to be diſpoſed of for the uſe of her penſioners; a ſmall packet to each of the apothecary's family; her watch to Jane Atwood—To John Fitzorton an emblematical deſign of her own painting, repreſenting the Angel of Forgiveneſs receiving from the Angel of Penitence a ſcroll, on which the words—' Pardon and Friendſhip' were curiouſly tinted, and underneath the illuſtration of two figures with hands joined, repreſenting their two fathers. At the bottom of the box was found a pacquet ſuperſcribed—" Henry's." He had begun to fear that, amongſt theſe ſolemn arrangements, he ſhould find no memorial for himſelf; and though it is but a melancholy evidence of good will to receive on ſuch occaſions, the heart feels an aggravation of its woe to be left without its tribute. He opened it in haſte, and perceived very ſtriking reſemblances of Olivia and both his children cut out with ſciſſars,

ſciſſars, from a remembrance, and a ſtrong impreſſion of their features—a few lines were written in the envelope, which covered this little gift.—" May the beſt of men live long to bleſs the beſt of women, and of wives! the lovelieſt of children!—the nobleſt of brothers!—ſuch ſhall unceaſingly be the prayer of the heaven-devoted Caroline Stuart!" " But, I fear, I have done what I ought not," ſaid Denniſon—" theſe were not to be forwarded to any of the parties concerned till after to-morrow:" " To-morrow!" cried Henry —" when my Lady Caroline had paſſed her vow," reſumed Denniſon,—" then, too, I was to have ſent to my dear maſter, the Lieutenant, his ſiſter's laſt will and teſtament, wherein ſhe has done all things worthy of her; and though ſhe has appointed her brother to ſee her general loving kindneſs fulfilled, ſhe has named Squire Henry, and Madam Olivia, to diſtribute her bounty to her penſioners; and, as I cannot expect, indeed, as I do not wiſh," ſaid the veteran, " to live long in the world

world after ſhe has bid it farewell, if that ſhould be God's good pleaſure, I mean that my little *modicums* ſhould go in the ſame channel, pleaſe your honours—yet I wiſh I had not mentioned theſe things now, as I ſee it has diſtreſſed us, though I thought, while his reverence was gone to know our fate, it might make us leſs ſorrowful to obſerve how my Lady, whom we all know and love, has ordered every thing for her friends in the world, even as if her convent was her coffin, and, to be ſure, it is pretty much the ſame ſort of matter." It is certain, Denniſon could not have related a more unlikely ſet of occurrences to exhilarate the ſpirits of his drooping friends, as, indeed, the tremblings which ſeized his own aged limbs, and the tears which fell from his old eyes, might teſtify, yet he meant it all in love. "There's not a doubt remaining," ſaid Henry, "all is over!—theſe are proofs." "And if they be, we muſt learn to reſign," anſwered John Fitzorton. "We muſt not be unworthy the example of a tender, ſolitary, ſelf-

ſelf-ſuſtaining young woman—arouſe, my brother: let us again examine, and with the minds of men and of chriſtians, the arguments of her whom we thus mourn after and arraign. Her own explanations of herſelf have not even yet been duly attended to. We received them in the hour of confuſion, and read them in that of terrour and deſpair." The Colonel, conceiving the peruſal of Caroline's letter might now produce a good effect on them all, read it aloud, holding his dejected brother by the hand. It was addreſſed to—

CHARLES STUART, Eſq.
*Guiſe Abbey.*

"Ah! deareſt and ſole remaining hope of an ill-fated yet retrievable houſe, read with a patient mind theſe ſacred pages now ſubmitted to thy diſcretion and virtue. Our father—I truſt in the merciful!—happy in heaven—re-united to our long ſainted mother—our friends honourably bleſſed on earth—my brother not deſtitute, and with

the prefpect of being united to virtue and love like his own, re-united, alfo, in facred friendfhip with the elected companion of his youthful days, and with the patron of his fortunes—the highly valued Henry and John Fitzorton, and the noble Olivia, whom they confpire to blefs and hônour; thereſeems but one path open to Caroline, and that fhe has ventured to take. I have even to the good and holy Arthur only fignified my intentions, and called on him to give me, not advice, but affiftance: that affiftance, which to have refufed, would have rendered him unworthy any longer to be my fpiritual guide, and have compelled me to feek another. My defigns were formed in filent thought, and eloquence or remonftrance would have alike been vain, had he attempted to ufe them as weapons againft my refolves. I hope ere you receive this, I fhall have provided for every claim and duty that remains to me in fociety, perhaps more fubftantially, than if I had continued to live in its bofom; for I fhall confide in the agency of thofe who have

more

more ſtrength, more wiſdom, and firmer health than myſelf.—Alas I am in many things weak!—ſtrong only in the love I bear my friends, and, therefore, reſolved to avoid acting towards them as if I were an enemy.

" According to the ceremonies of our faith I have entered theſe walls—and finding many reaſons to be ſatisfied with my election, and not one to counterpoiſe it,—my purpoſe is to cover myſelf meekly with the eternal veil, *before* the time of your receiving theſe informations. It is the only point on which I can ſeparate myſelf from a tenderly loved brother's claims: the ſole principle of action in which I feel myſelf without reſponſibility to any *human* power.

" The withdrawing myſelf from the aſylum which the pureſt benevolence ſo long afforded me, every circumſtance attaching to which I loved, could only be excuſed by the fear that my own weak ſtate, yet ſtrong feeling of gratitude, might diſpoſſeſs me of the power to reſiſt arguments of kindneſs, and by that reſiſtance ſeem to adhere

obſtinately to my own purpoſe, or by yielding, become even of my gratitude the ſacrifice. Expreſs this, I pray you, with more force, and with all the ſenſibility I feel on that ſubject, to all our noble benefactors.

"My brother and my friend—farewell.

"CAROLINE STUART."

"For the reaſons aſſigned above,

"Sanctioned by FATHER ARTHUR."

This letter was regarded by every one as a ſort of funeral oration drawn up immediately before the deceaſe of the orator, and there was but one ſentiment about it, —viz. that Caroline Stuart was irrevocably devoted.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE NOVICIATE.

MEANTIME the good father Arthur joined fervently in the midnight prayers of the convent, fitting his ſoul for every pious work. He ſupplicated for that power of impartial judgment, and of equal miniſtration, that, while it removes the miſts of ſenſe, and elevates the ſpirit beyond the ſeduction of mortal things, extinguiſhes not the principle of humanity, which, even in the boſom of holineſs, reminds us we are men: and after remaining in the chapel till the nuns and ſiſters were gone, each to her humble chamber, he repaired to the confeſſional.

Caroline was already there kneeling before figures of the Virgin, and of her immortal Son. Her countenance was marked by awe, mingled with ſerenity.

She appeared to have ſubdued thoſe heavy conflicts of the ſoul, which uſually precede the ſolemn act of renouncing the world, while we are conſcious there remains in it many objects precious to the human affections; even her health appeared to have regained ſome force, from the ſtrength of her mind, which had been for ſo long a time cultivating habits, and imitating examples, of acquieſcence and tranquillity.—The ſacred images of the great prototype of all meekneſs, and the pureſt patron of all reſignation—"the man of ſorrows, and acquainted with grief,"—were perpetually placed in her view. She ſaw in every compartment of the convent, his hallowed figure, exhibiting at once mildneſs and reſolution, the ſpear goring his ſide, the thorns platted round his brow, and the nails piercing his feet. By this example of perfect obedience, ſhe had been modelling her own—and, even as the holy father entered, ſhe was reciting aloud, while her eye fixed on the ſhadowed form of Him, whoſe unſpotted hands, though faſtened to the croſs, had

been

been inceſſantly ſtretched out to diſpenſe bleſſings, and whoſe aſſiduous feet, though rivetted to the tree, always went about doing good.

"Come then, my ſoul, devote thyſelf to that dying Saviour! cover thyſelf under the wings of his redeeming love! Take ſanctuary under that tree of life, and fly for ſafety to that city of refuge, opened in his wounds!—employ the wakeful night, even as he employed it, in ardent prayer for the happineſs of all the good, and pardon of all who have felt their errour! O arm me with thy fortitude as with thy benevolence, that when the ſun ſhall be arreſted in his career, the ſolid ſtructure of the earth daſhed to pieces, and the heavens themſelves be rent aſunder!—the fates of all mankind hanging on the very point of an irreverſible deciſion, I may behold the convulſions of expiring nature with compoſure, and rejoicing with myriads more—and ah! may all whom I have ever loved or pitied be amongſt theſe—welcome the conſummation of all things!"

She rofe to receive Arthur, when fhe had clofed her meditation. "My dear, my virtuous, my ever, ever-beloved child," faid the facred man—"the great and decifive moment of your exiftence is at hand: I will not afk if you are fitted to meet it, for your life has been one of voluntary difcipline, and earneft preparation." "I hope it has, and I look forward to the ceremony which is this morning to take place, with a complacence that augments as that hour comes nearer." The father began to confefs her, and finding in all her refponfes and avowals, as to the ordinary queftions, he began to fulfil the promife he had made to the friends he had left at the priory. "All this is well," obferved Arthur; "but tell me, daughter, if the motives, laudable as they were, which led thee to the refuge of thefe fheltering walls, were removed"—"Ought my facred friend," interrupted Caroline, "to propofe a queftion which revives fuch themes, at fuch a moment? Father, my motives remain, and the

the resolves formed upon them are, even like them, immoveable."

"But if," proceeded Arthur, "they were all removed, by him to whom the steadfast mountain is as the bending shrub that trembles at its base—if that power by whom the fabrick of the universe changes its place, or dissolves to the touch—if he should have prepared for my daughter, that peace in the world, which she has sought in leaving it"———

The confessor paused, but the confessed was silent.

"If" resumed the former, "one of those beings, in guard of whose felicity thou art become a sister of this sanctuary, should long since have ascended to heaven, yet used the latest moments of her happy life"—

"Olivia dead!" ejaculated Caroline.

"To express," continued Arthur, "that circumstances would allow her children to find a second mother in her friend"—

"O, they will find her in many friends!" cried Caroline.—"And that friend was de-

fcribed to be Caroline Stuart," obferved the father—" how then would fhe determine?"

" According to the principles of her own unfhaken faith, which never would interrupt thofe of the proteftant father of proteftant children. I bow, weepingly, to the Providence that has difpofed of Olivia Fitzorton, but my motives, good father, extended to the religion of all her furvivors: fpare then unneceffary difcuffion, and fuffer me to employ the few intermediate hours, in regaining that ferenity you have difturbed, that I may render my vows with unmixed fatisfaction."

" Be it fo, my child; retire to thy place of repofe, and of meditation, there examine the great and momentous truths which thefe papers will convey—there commune with thine own heart—and if on the evidence of thofe truths, it no longer appears a meafure of wifdom or of piety to circumfcribe thy powers of conferring happinefs, and of doing good, to the narrow bounds of this holy place, thou wilt order its gates to

to unclofe, and either meet me at the priory houfe, where I will abide thy coming, or fend to me the fummons to attend the ceremony of thy eternal vows."

The blamelefs father led her out of the confeffional into the convent, and feeling that he had no power of affifting her choice, he bleffed her, and departed.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### THE SUSPENSE PROCEEDS.

WHEN father Arthur returned to his friends, he found that none of them had retired to reft, nor even fat down to any refrefhment; but that every one was wound up by expectation and folicitude to the higheft pitch of thofe corroding powers: he faluted them with his wonted benignity, but, alas! he was invefted with no authority to put an end to their fufpenfe. He offered, however, in relief of it, a faith-

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ful detail of what had paſt in the confeſſional: with firmneſs, he gave the feelings of the recluſe, and concluded by obſerving, that he had left in her hands, not only the letter which had been brought by the Lieutenant from the Colonel, but all the other pacquets which had been collecting, whether kept back by diſcretion, or retarded by accident; "in ſhort," ſaid the pious father, "I have delivered to her contemplation all that it was proper for her to know, and concealed only what might have unduly influenced her election." As he finiſhed his account, there was ſtill left ſufficient to torture and to appeaſe conjecture; ſolemn ſilence, invaded only by the ſighs of Henry, prevailed throughout the aſſembly. Arthur threw a beam of ſunſhine over the proſpect, by obſerving, that though in no degree receding from her point, ſhe gave her utmoſt attention to all he had to report, and that while ſhe preſerved unwarped the ſobriety of her mind, ſhe diſplayed and made no attempt to repel the ſenſibility of her heart: and in that

juſt

juſt poiſe of faculty and feeling—the moſt to be deſired, when an aweful deciſion is to be made,—he ſaid, he left her.

For the firſt time ſince his entrance into the abbot's houſe, Henry ſmiled, as if he caught a paſſing ray from that far diſtant, yet çheering hope: the good father ventured to clear the proſpect yet more: the generous Denniſon whiſpered Henry, that his honour ſhould conſider that firſt love was not ſoon forgotten. The kind Floreſco, almoſt imperceptibly approaching the only diſengaged ear of Henry, Denniſon remaining at the other—humbly remarked " that the good God had taken away poor ickle negro-man's dear heart—dear Loraida, and yet good father Arthur had made him tink God is good God ſtill, ſo ickle negroman only tries to make him's ſoul like white chriſtian man's ſoul, that him may ſee hims only love in happy place."—The Lieutenant held one of the hands of his friend, and often preſſed it to his boſom. The Colonel took the other, from time to time whiſpering—" Let what will

will be the iſſue, remember me!" Thus partly by remonſtrance, and partly by hope, though each was ſlight, yet, as the ſpark, if nurſed cautiouſly, and ſupplied, will afford ſome warmth, and ſome light, even if it baffles all care in the end, Henry ſuffered himſelf awhile to be comforted; inſomuch that Arthur perſuaded him to ſet his friends a ſocial example by ſitting down to the humble repaſt.

The morning hours, however, chaſed one another away without producing any ſort of reply from the devotee; the day had already dawned. Every vigilant eye and watchful ear of Arthur's party remained uncloſed. Even the good father himſelf, whoſe attempered ſpirit had been long armed againſt the power of the general invaders of our brief life's tranquillity, was too ſincerely intereſted in the event of Caroline's deciſion, to court that repoſe, or indeed, to partake of that refreſhment, which health and virtue rarely denied him: and although he had bleſſed the board, and he regarded as his children all that were aſ-

ſembled, the viands were ſerved, but untaſted.

In the meantime, the fair devout was employed in contemplations of the higheſt import. When ſhe had reached her cell—and never did veſtal enter with a purer ſpirit, and ſomewhat reſumed herſelf, ſhe ſat down by her lamp, not diſcompoſed, nor yet diſordered. She opened the papers which Arthur had left with her, not with an unſteady hand, yet not without ſomething of tremor. Preſſing her croſs, and bending to her crucifix, ſhe roſe haſtily, and kneeling down, ſought ſupport from him who alone can give it. She returned to her ſeat, and unfolding all the letters withont heſitation, took up one at hazard; it happened to be that which John had entruſted to the conveyance of her brother, a peruſal of which, indeed, rendered the reſt iterative and ſuperfluous. As we truſt that it has not left the reader's memory, we ſhall only note that, after having read it thrice, ſhe ſat ruminating on the varied wonders it contained.

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She reſumed once more the ſame letter, and although generally impreſſive, one paſſage was particularly dwelt upon, and when ſhe had paid it more attention than the reſt, though, in truth, the point which ſo much engaged her conſiſted but of a ſingle word, ſhe imagined her lamp grew unuſually dim, but after trimming it, ſhe perceived the obſtruction of light came from her own eyes, for one of their tears had fallen upon that very word. Almoſt, inſtantly, on her diſcovery of this, ſhe folded up the letter with a reſolved hand, and although ſhe acknowledged in the ſuperſcription of the others the well-known characters of her long-loſt companions, Mrs. Herbert and Johanna, and one from Charles, her much-loved brother, ſhe wrapt them in the general cover, under which ſhe had received them, and left her cell.

The indeciſive anxieties had ſo accumulated in the minds of the ſociety at the priory, as the broad day came on, that each individual examined the almoſt hopeleſs countenance of the others for relief, and found

found it not. The eighth hour was founded from the convent, and that it had been underftood was the time appointed for the ceremony. Henry rufhed out, as he faw fome lay fifters paffing from one of the ftreets with fmall bafkets in their hands: Hurrying towards them as they were ringing at the outer gate of the convent, he obferved that the bafkets were filled with the flowers of the feafon, to ftrew the floor of the veftal as fhe paffed to the altar.—He feized one of the bafkets, and grafping what it contained in filent but profound defpair, threw them again into the bafket, which he returned to the aftonifhed fifter.—"They are to cover then, eternally, the corpfe of Caroline!" exclaimed he. The trembling fifter took refuge within the half-opened gate, which was clofed again in a moment.

Smiting his breaft, the forlorn Henry turned again towards the door of the houfe, and perceived himfelf furrounded by his fympathizing friends; but the majeftick Arthur exhorted him to refpect the decrees of the Omnipotent, whatever they might fuggeft

geſt to the perſon he bewailed; obſerving, that if his paſſion was virtuous it would not ſhrink from the trials of virtue; and if the happineſs of Caroline was precious, he would be content to let her purſue it according to the dictate of her own conſcience. "Brother, remember me!" reiterated John. Henry returned into the abbot's houſe, and endeavoured to compoſe himſelf—ſtrode along the apartment—took up the poor ſpaniel, which had attempted, in vain, to follow his maſter's irregular movements—and then Henry ſighing over him, placed him on his lap—Seeing Denniſon weep, he dried his tears—aſſured him he was perfectly reconciled—and ſat himſelf down, and ſobbed with grief. A number of perſons paſſing by the window ſoon caught his attention; throwing it open, he perceived them dreſſed as for the ſolemnity—and moving towards the convent.—Again, Henry ruſhed forth, he queſtioned one of the aſſembly—they were friends or kindred of the ſiſters, or nuns, who have permiſſion to ſee the ceremony of a novi-

tiate,

tiate, who is to take the vows—and were fearful of being too late. Some of the visitors had gained admittance, while the person interrogated was speaking. Others were hurrying in. Henry ran forward to the gate of the convent, while it was yet receiving the invited guests. The notes of the organ, mingling with the chant of some priests who were just arrived in the cloysters of the convent, struck like thunder on the ear of Henry—he attempted to precipitate himself within the portals, but they had received all who were to pass—and were shut a second time against him. He struggled to the bell, and rung it—in vain: the moment was passed—His surrounding friends, and the gathering multitude, saved him from dashing himself with desperate rage against the massy nails that projected from the convent gate.—"Hark! hark!" said he,—"the bell tolls; it is the funeral of the barbarous Caroline Stuart!"

While his friends, who had all followed, were conveying him from the astonished croud, the gate of the convent was again opened

opened by the porteress, and a monk issuing forth, desired to be conducted to father Arthur; but soon perceiving him, he advanced towards him, exclaiming with a loud voice—" Father, your presence is immediately demanded in the convent of the visitation: not a moment may be lost." Arthur instantly accompanied the monk, and the despairing Henry, who indistinctly heard the summons, was too much overcome even to struggle any longer, and was carried, as if stiffened by death, into the abbot's house.

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## CHAPTER XXX.

### THE VEIL.

NO sooner had father Arthur gained the interior of the convent, than he found the sisters, the nuns, the chief priest, and St. Seraphina, the superior, standing confused, and in disorder, in the chapel: every thing

was

was in preparation for the ceremony: the floor ſtrewed, the carpet on which, according to cuſtom, the newly-conſecrated nun was to fall; the neck and head-dreſs to change from the novitiate white veil to the black, appointed to be worn by the nuns of the order, were ready. The belt and beads were placed on the altar, one of the ſiſters was tolling the bell, to give warning to the votary, that the holy aſſociation were waiting to hear, and to record her vows. As ſoon as Arthur made his appearance, the principal abbeſs came forward to inform him that his preſence was neceſſary, to enforce the obedience of the novice, whom he had recommended to her convent, aſſerting, that ſhe had come forward with objections when it was too late to admit them, and that ſhe had reſiſted every holy authority, and repelled every ſacred exhortation with a pride and confidence utterly inconſiſtent with a veſtal, and with the meek and unobtruſive demeanour ſhe had obſerved during her whole novitiate. "She has refuſed even to make her appearance," ſaid the abbeſs. As Arthur

Arthur was about to reply, Caroline herſelf entered the chapel, and bending with unaffected reverence to the altar, and with due regard to the ſanctity of the place, declared "that ſhe felt the moſt undiſſembled ſorrow that the conduct of one ſhe had ſo long reverenced, and whom ſtill ſhe loved and honoured, had rendered it neceſſary," ſhe ſaid, "to obtrude herſelf, at ſuch a moment, and in ſuch a preſence, on the judgment of the aſſembly." After this exordium, ſhe informed Arthur, that having peruſed ſome of the papers he had left for her meditation, ſhe had repaired, even ſo early as the fourth hour, to the chamber of Saint Seraphina, whom ſhe found ſtill at her devotions; that ſhe had ſtated with candour the unexpected motives which made it neceſſary to cloſe the terms of her conventual life with the moment that cloſed her novitiate—even the moment in which ſhe was making the declaration—and at the ſame time informed the ſuperior, that although many of the circumſtances which formed theſe motives, being wholly of a domeſtick and private nature,

ture were too delicate for discussion, she referred her to father Arthur for her justification, in demanding the privilege of withholding her vows, and of quitting the sisterhood, under his holy protection: humbly expressing a hope that she might leave her embrace and blessing with every respected individual of the community. The preparations were, however, suffered to proceed, the right of election was disputed, and the good and beneficent St. Seraphina, "who had been to me," said Caroline, "till that moment, as a friend and a parent, taxed me with caprice, irreverence and impiety."

"It was but her grief," said Arthur, benignly, "her grief to part from you, my daughter: she felt that she found in your society the endearment of a child, and to be suddenly bereaved of it, even in the hour that she had told her heart you would remain with her for the rest of your life, gave to her zeal, prompted by her affection, an earnestness for which your love and respect must allow—but sister Seraphina can require

only a moment's recollection of herſelf to know that forced vows are unacceptable to the power to whom they are offered—that faith conſtrained encourages hypocriſy, and that every act that chains the mind is impious: our ſiſter is not to learn beſides, that freedom of choice during the year of experiment and probation gives to every votary the power of returning to ſociety, or of remaining ſecluded; and it has often happened, as in the caſe before us, that a change of circumſtances warrants a change of conduct; all the virtues, it is true, are like God himſelf, who is their fountain, invariable and eternal; but the ſame principles which, at one time, conduct a novice to the cloyſter may lead her again into the world. I am here to vouch, my ſiſter, that many ſuch circumſtances have ariſen to determine our virtuous daughter to leave this holy manſion: but, in leaving it, ſhe departs not from the bleſſed power to whom it is dedicated. Siſter Seraphina is not amongſt thoſe miſguided zealots of our perſuaſion, or of any other, who believe that the omnipreſent

deity

deity can be ſerved only within the pale of their own convents, or in that of the catholick or proteſtant church. Happier if every worſhipper has acceſs to his proper temple; but true religion, my ſiſter knows, like the ſublime ſpirit that inſpires it, is not to be circumſcribed: the veritable God is to be found, and a temple may be raiſed to him, in every part of his univerſe. Let us not narrow his ſacred preſence, even to that bound, ſince, paſſing the limit of our contracted globe, inſufficient, alas! to fill even our finite idea of the unmeaſured authority and government of his power, his benevolence, and his wiſdom, he ſpreads himſelf over other worlds as incalculable in number, as impartial in the diffuſion of his holy ſpirit: and doubtleſs, in every part of theſe regions, the votary may, with equal ſincerity, and with equal certainty of being heard, erect his altar and offer up his prayer.—This, our daughter," added Arthur, after a ſhort pauſe, "I pledge myſelf, can always be happy in the aſſurance that ſhe is every where in the guard, and under the ſacred eye of her Creator. She

has raifed to his glory a fhrine in her heart, and were fhe fhut out from every other fanctuary, and bereft of the fight of all thofe holy emblems, figures, and ceremonies, which we humbly truft are fymbols as innocent as we find them impreffive—although, God forbid! we fhould impofe them as fetters on our brethren, who have rejected them!—were, I fay, the good daughter who is feparating herfelf from this community, to be feparated for ever from the view, alfo, of thefe;—be affured, O fifter in the faith, fhe would ftill be confcious of being in the prefence of the majefty of heaven, even as fhe is at this moment, and her adoration would be every where the fame."

The furrounding affembly were much awed, and fuch as were too bigotted or prejudiced to yield to the matter, were affected by the manner of his harangue. The abbefs for fome moments remained filent, then going up to Caroline, took her by the hand, and led her to the venerable Francifcan. "Brother," faid fhe, "in refigning this child to your difpofal, I give up one of the

pureſt treaſures of my heart: a treaſure, which if I have attempted to preſerve, it is becauſe I could not but deem it too precious to be expoſed again to the perils of the world; haply my ſelf-love may have, alas! mixed with this motive, for ſhe has taught me to feel that a mother's tenderneſs may fill the heart of the patroneſs of a cloyſter, —even as theſe human, and I hope, forgiven tears, have filled her eyes."

Touched to the receſſes of her gentle boſom, Caroline folded her arms in the robes of St. Seraphina, as ſhe bent her knee even to the ground; and then moving to the altar, on which were laid the ſeveral emblems of veſtal conſecration, ſhe proſtrated herſelf before the crucifix, and taking up the pall which was ſymbolically to have been thrown over her while ſhe was renouncing the world, "O! till an eternal veil like this," exclaimed ſhe, "ſhall cover my frame, every holy precept I owe to this pious community ſhall form the practice of my life:—and theſe, thou honoured preceptor!—and ye, my beloved ſiſterhood! ſhall be joined in every prayer, and min-

gle in every hope of our everlafting reunion! Such are my fubftituted vows :— Accept them, thou who haft called me hence, in place of thofe which my foul was prepared to offer!" The abbefs raifed and embraced her; the nuns received her from the fuperior; the prayers appointed for her eternal feclufion, were now converted into fpontaneous and fervent afpirations for her happinefs in the world; every knee was bent; every head was bowed; at length, the abbefs again made a folemn furrender of her charge to father Arthur, and Caroline Stuart quitted the convent, followed even to the outer gate by the whole fifterhood; fome of whom had gathered up the flowers which had been fpread over the carpet, to ftrew them in the path that again led her into the world. But when fhe had paffed the gate, and faw it clofing on the attendant train, who for twelve long months had been unto her indeed as fifters, and to whom fhe had been a pure example of refignation and piety, fhe caft on them a parting look which the pure affections of virtuous minds can alone give or receive.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### DESPAIR AND REASON.

ARTHUR had deemed it one of the fair and neceffary referves he had conditioned for, to conceal from Caroline every circumftance which might bias her decifion, or practife on her heart; confequently fhe had as yet no idea that either her brother or any of her friends were fo near at hand; and confcious as he was of the afflicting, but inevitable ftate in which he had left thofe, he was anxious to prevent any abrupt difcovery of the important iffue of his return to the convent. She was ftill in her novitiate drefs, but as Arthur led her by the priory door, he had opportunity to convey his charge into an interior apartment, of which he always kept the keys; beyond which was a fmall book-room facred to his own contemplations, and thither he now reforted with Caroline.

Seating himſelf beſide her, and in the moſt affectionate manner addreſſing her, he briefly but cautiouſly acquainted her with the ſeveral things he had judged it proper to conceal; and when he had carried his converſation through the ſeveral circumſtances that related to her brother's journey and voyage of fraternal affection, and the nature and import of his embaſſy from the caſtle, of the pious death of Olivia, and her laſt meſſage of love mingled with wiſhes reſpecting the diſpoſal of her huſband and children, he was proceeding to bring down the intelligence nearer to the moment before them, when Caroline interpoſing, obſerved, that ſhe found all he had been relating mentioned at length, and with many additional circumſtances in the pacquets with which he had preſented her; confeſſing to him that on the ſtrong oppoſition of the ſuperior, and the urgence of ſeveral of the ſiſters, that ſhe ſhould ſuffer the ſolemnities of the day to proceed, arguing, amidſt ſighs and tears, that it was an offence to heaven to ſtop them; ſhe had

gone back to her cell, and in the profoundeſt ſolitude not only read the letter, which had before thrice paſſed her eye, and which till then ſeemed all-commanding as to the ſteps ſhe ought to take, but that ſhe peruſed and reperuſed every other paper, to the intent, ſeriouſly and ſacredly of confeſſing the errour of her deciſion, and blending ſuch confeſſion in her vows, or of being farther convinced her determination to withhold thoſe vows, was ſanctioned by every duty upon earth. "But," ſaid Caroline,—"ſtrengthened by all I read, by all I thought, in the belief that I had decided juſtly, I hope it deſerves a fairer name than the ſelf-willed tenacity which had been imputed to me,—if my reſolve then took a form of reſiſtance which would not have given way to either argument or ſupplication. I was returning to the ſiſterhood to repeat my intentions with renovated force, when I ſaw with the comfort which always attends me in his preſence, the friend and guide of my life. You know the reſt."

"Then you are ſufficiently prepared to hear that the Lieutenant, though he did not give you thoſe letters, was the bearer of them; that he traced us from our receſs in the happy iſle, to our ſanctuary here; and that finally, he is in this very houſe, attended by your humble, but ever faithful friend, True George."

Although the reader has reaſon to know that, yet, with the name of True George, aſſociated another name ſo very powerful, at this ſingular moment, that ſhe could not help aſking whether ſhe had diſtinctly heard what he ſaid as to her brother's fellow-traveller? "Yes, True George came over with him," replied Arthur, "and ſome others."—"Others!" ſaid Caroline; "Yes, our protector the Colonel ſoon followed him."—"John Fitzorton!" exclaimed Caroline, dwelling emphatically on the word —John! "how generous, how good, how like himſelf! I hope," ſaid ſhe, heſitating, "he left all his friends, all his family well:—as well, alas! as they can be!" Rightly ſuggeſting that a managed diſco-

very

very of the grand decifion might be no lefs neceffary to Henry than to Caroline, the monk haftened to the room where the caftle party had been affembled. He encountered Florefco in his way up ftairs. "Maffer a-bed," exclaimed the youth, fearfully. The monk afcended, and faw his friends furrounding a bed on which they had laid the defpairing Henry, who had manifefted fymptoms which made them for fome time apprehend the lofs of his fenfes; but he foon became more compofed, and was fpeaking coherently, when Arthur entered.—"Fear not, my friends," faid he, "I perceive a path yet left to fave me,—one which none of you can blame." He lay fome time revolving this new image in his mind, or rather recurring to a preconceived defign, now to be matured. His tranquillity returned in proportion as he made progrefs in his purpofed plan. At length, with refolution, he rofe from the bed, and walked backwards and forwards in the room, from time to time affuring his friends he was regaining his peace. "I am fettling my

 mind,"

mind," ſaid he, with diſordered accents; he alternately took the hands of his brother and his friend Charles; as he paſſed to and fro, his countenance became more and more ſerene, yet tears fell from his eyes, and he ſighed as he lay down again on the bed. But, at length, recognizing Arthur, he again roſe impetuouſly. "It is unneceſſary to make any report of the event," exclaimed he,—"I will ſpare you the particulars. Caroline Stuart has devoted herſelf—yes, your delay—your ſilence—all which I have ſeen—heard—felt,—pronounce my doom. Attend therefore to my ſolemn determinations; nay, interrupt me not,—ſpeak not, I implore you, till I have done. I ſhall want your aſſiſtance, but it is nothing in which your pure ſpirit may not engage; and it is the only point that remains to reſtore my happineſs,—to reconcile my ſoul:—hear then,—I conjure you, to hear me!"—"I will," anſwered the worthy prieſt with energy, as if anticipating Henry's ideas; "but, perhaps, it ſhould be heard with leſs hazard of interruption."

The

The party would have left the room—"No," cried the monk, "your presence may be requisite; but as we shall be less disturbed in one of the lower apartments, I would advise if my son feels himself strong enough"—"Strong enough for every thing," answered Henry, wildly—"behold I can walk unsupported." "This way then my son, and the rest of our friends will follow." They now descended into the gothick apartment fronting the street, where they had before assembled.

"I have a presentiment of what revolves in your mind, my son," continued the friar, "and will return in a few moments prepared to give you audience." While Arthur absented himself, Henry's whole soul seemed to be employed.

The Franciscan meanwhile returned to Caroline, and found her again perusing the pacquets, and some of that colour which paints the human affections, but which an habitual repression of those affections, and a life severe to itself, expels gradually, even from the heart, had returned into her cheek.

Arthur

Arthur judged this to be the moment in which more animating tidings might be ſafely communicated—he extended the pleaſing news, by informing her that he could now promiſe her an interview with her brother, and the humble George, as well as with her friend, John Fitzorton, whenever ſhe was prepared to admit them. "What preparation can be neceſſary, my good father? I entreat of you to let me this moment attend them—I have obſerved in you an apparent wiſh to procraſtinate that alarms me:—You replied not to my former apprehenſion as to the health of others of our friends. Neither have I been quite candid. Wherefore ſhould I deal, my good father, with you reſervedly?—the motives, cogent and manifold, which have drawn me from the cloyſter ought to be, and are, ſufficient to juſtify all the movements of my heart—wherefore then have I ſo long forborne a more direct enquiry after Henry Fitzorton? I entreat of you to ſatisfy my ſolicitude about his health—but perhaps you wiſh the tidings to come to me from my brother

brother, or from the Colonel ?" " I wiſh it, my deareſt child, to come in a manner the moſt acceptable, and to that end only have I procraſtinated. Henry Fitzorton accompanied the Colonel: he too is in the abbot's houſe—his health, perhaps his reaſon, and his life, depend upon his happineſs—his happineſs is, I truſt, not remote: he is very near us. I will place you where you ſhall hear what I have told you confirmed; but whatever you may obſerve, I call on that obedience which has, invariably, diſtinguiſhed the conduct of my deareſt daughter, to retain her ſtation, unheard, unſeen, till I give the ſignal, and that ſignal I pledge myſelf ſhall not be delayed beyond the moment even of her own atteſted ſatisfaction." The father re-conducted her from the little book-room to the apartment which joined it, and which was divided from the front parlour where Henry and his friends were aſſembled, only by a ſlight partition, from whence there was a door of communication, and the half of that door was of glaſs ſhaded to the extent of the glazing by a

curtain

curtain that run upon rings. "Be this your point of unobſerved obſervation," whiſpered the monk, to the agitated Caroline, as he drew a chair immediately beſide the curtain. He then went back into the parlour.

Henry had been working up his ſeveral faculties to the bent of his reſolve, and he imagined them to be all in ſo firm a ſtate, that advancing to Arthur on his entrance, he declared aloud his ſtedfaſt purpoſe."

"Now then, friend, and holy father, I call upon you in your profeſſional office for that aid which it would be derogatory to your character to refuſe me. In the firſt place, I bequeath the education of my dear children to thoſe I love beſt in the world—ſave one, who has this cruel morn precipitated herſelf out of that world—my duty to their angel mother, at whatever price, has been fulfilled—my boſom friend has by a new election regained the path of happineſs—my dear brothers I feel aſſured will remain to ſuſtain the honour of my family, to comfort our poor, and become joint guar-

dians

dians of my little ones—I refolve then to follow the example of Caroline Stuart fo far as to dedicate the reft of my days to monaftick fequeftration; and as the faith I have adopted takes no change from the colour of my deep difappointments, but will, I truft, in time, enable me to fupport and furvive them—to furmount them is beyond my hope, beyond even my wifh,—I determine to join myfelf to the fraternity of which you, my reverend father, are a member, even to the holy brotherhood of St. Francis. I am not to learn that a neighbouring monaftery, even in Coutance, is facred to that thrice-bleffed faint; and it will foothe me to be near my Caroline, although the eternal walls, even when heaven itfelf which had fet us free, fhall then again throw over us inextricable chains. Seek not, O my brother and my friends, to oppofe me in this immovable refolve—place not as obftacles before its execution the dear, dear objects of my paternal love—objects which are even new incentives to profecute my defign—were I deftitute of John and James

Fitzorton

Fitzorton, I might ſtruggle ſtill in the weary pilgrimage of the world, but to them I can confide my treaſures, and, alas! I feel that neither by precept nor example, could their ill-fated parent any longer aſſiſt their youth; and the affection of their uncles ſhall ſoon obliviate all memory of their unhappy father."

Perceiving the Colonel had been throwing over the whole of this propoſition the moſt formidable frown, and that he was coming forward with arguments which would deſtroy his project, "Brother," continued the conſcious Henry, "I ſee that you diſapprove my plan, and that other of my friends deplore it; but in this one point behold me inexorable. Receive, then, as ſolemn pledges of my confidence in you, the ſon and daughter of a man reſolved to quit the world—you cannot, dare not, refuſe me. Guard for them my fortunes. Everlaſtingly ſhall they and their protectors, and all preſent, and all abſent, who have a claim on my heart, be included in my prayers!" An audible and excla-

exclamatory ſigh broke from the oppoſite room: ſuch of the company as heard it looked ſomewhat ſtartled on each other. Henry had pauſed, and riſen from his ſeat as if uncertain of the ſound, but not again hearing it, he addreſſed himſelf more immediately to Arthur. "And now father," ſaid he, "having witneſſed my immovable reſolution to devote the reſt of my days to a ſecluſion, not leſs abſolute than that of Caroline Stuart, who alone could have made the world delightful to me—now that ſhe, for whom ſo many years of my life have been paſt in faithful ſorrow—now that ſhe has removed herſelf for ever—I call upon you to grant ſanctuary to a breaking heart—to afford it a place of refuge. Voluntary has been the profeſſion of my faith: voluntary ſhall be the offering of myſelf up to the church which cheriſhes it. O haſte me, father, that I may be received into its boſom: and confirm, even now before this aſſembly of my friends, my holy election."

"I con-

"I conſent," replied Arthur, who had in vain attempted to ſpeak, "I conſent that Henry Fitzorton, in conſideration of his ſufferings, and his conſtancy for Caroline Stuart, and of his many and hard trials in the years of his youth, even unto this day, ſhall follow her example."

The company were amazed. John was riſen to proteſt againſt the meaſure.

"I conſent," reiterated the Franciſcan, "and will give my aſſiſtance to the rendering his reſolve not leſs abſolute than hers; and in deſpite of all oppoſition I here pledge myſelf, even before the altar, which in the adjoining chapel of the priory has often received my bending knee, and before the ſacred figures that ſurround the ſhrine, and every other witneſs who is here preſent, or within hearing of my voice—yes, by all theſe, I pledge myſelf to hear, and to record the vows of Henry, even as I have heard, and recorded thoſe of Caroline."

"It may not be," aſſerted John; "my brother has duties in the world—the duties

of

of a father, which during that father's life no ſubſtitute can——"

"Thoſe duties ſhall not ſuffer by the vows I am determined to ſanction." rejoined the monk. "Proceed we to the altar: this key will open the door which leads to the chapel." "I proteſt againſt the deed," anſwered John: "I will not pronounce on the conduct of Caroline, but in my brother a ſimilar act would be impious."

"And I too wholly diſapprove it in my ſiſter," exclaimed the Lieutenant. "Are the children of Olivia to be thus neglected? —are they to be baſely deſerted by their father?" cried John in aweful whiſpers— "O! ſainted ſpirit of the tendereſt mother! are thy little ones to become orphans?"

Henry ſtood irreſolute—Denniſon and Floreſco wept and prayed—The apothecary began to plead—True George had been in balance, whether he ſhould purſue the long-trodden ſteps of his beloved maſter, or retrace the paths that led to his plighted miſtreſs.

Meantime

Meantime the key had done its office—and the monk, firm in his purpofe, had caught one of Henry's hands: John forcibly feized the other, and began to drag it in an oppofite direction—"And is the far-famed father Arthur, like the meaneft bigot of his tribe, a man who trades in converfion—an impofer of his faith on the mifguided?—I am now juftified in believing my brother has been profelyted in another point—"

"Son," anfwered the monk, "when a proof of your charge appears, I will acknowledge its force; till then no earthly power—not your's—whom moft on earth I venerate—fhall impede my progrefs."

"Father aid me to pour forth my unfhaken intents before the fhrine you fpeak of, as a folemn earneft of my future confecration; and I fhall then feel myfelf beyond the reach of this unfair controul. I am refolved."

John, with ftrong indignation, flung back his brother's hand, and Arthur threw

open the folding doors, from which Caroline Stuart, in the almoſt inſupportable agitation of her feelings and of her frame, had, however, receded. The whole company followed the monk and Henry into the apartment, trembling at every ſtep. John came after them, with movements that marked his deeply-diſturbed mind.

"The chapel is at the end of theſe ſmall apartments," ſaid Arthur. He led Henry along, ſtill followed by the reſt. They, at length, entered the chapel of the priory: the altar was placed between two broad columns, on each of which were painted, at full length, two ſacred figures, the one of the bleſſed virgin, the other of the redeemer of the world. Henry fell on his knees the inſtant he came within view of the ſhrine. Arthur looked around with ſurpriſe, but as he was preparing to ſpeak, a part of Caroline's ſacred veſtment relieved him, and approaching the altar and kneeling alſo, he exclaimed, "Now, may the vows of my pious ſon be no leſs acceptable

ceptable to heaven than thoſe of my virtuous daughter!"

Inſtantly from behind that column, which repreſented the virgin, proceeded another ſigh, ſo penetrating, ſo audible, that Henry again ſtarted up, and ſtood fixed. "Bleſt, yet overwhelming moment!" cried a voice. Henry ran forward, and, in the ſucceeding moment, ſhe, from whom the melodious ſounds iſſued, ſprung to ſight, and Caroline Stuart ſtood confeſſed.

Unable to ſupport her various ſenſations, on hearing the key turning within the lock, and, as the hand of the reverend Arthur was preſſing againſt the door, ſhe had ſtarted from her ſeat, which, as the expreſſions ſhe had heard governed her movements, ſhe had alternately left and reviſited. —Unconſcious of motion, ſhe had continued her retreat from the one apartment to the other: ſhe gained the ſacred column, and with difficulty ſupported herſelf behind it, overcome with exceſs of pure felicity.

Aſtoniſh-

Aſtoniſhment and joy fixed the whole aſſembly, ſave Arthur, in the ſame ſtatue-like poſitions. It ſeemed as if the wand of an enchanter, even with the force of an electric communication, had in that inſtant completed its ſpell: and, indeed, it was magick of the higheſt kind, and from the moſt potent hand—a touch etherial that chained them for ſome minutes to their attitudes.

At length Henry called for the aid of John; and the Lieutenant ran to aſſiſt the failing ſteps of his ſiſter Caroline. But never had there yet been a period, in the life of either, ſo intereſting, ſo inſupportable, as that in which Caroline Stuart and Henry Fitzorton were conducted, by their brothers, into the arms of each other!—Truth, conſtancy, approved love, ſmiling pity, conſenting virtue, and rewarding piety, mingled in that embrace!—In one moment the bruiſed reed was made whole, and the almoſt quenched flax, purged of all its vapour, kindled into a flame, which burnt pure for ever.

"O! heaven of heavens!" exclaimed Henry, "and thou its pureſt pattern upon earth, inſpire me with gratitude equal to my tranſport—and with fortitude to endure it!" "There, there, my children!" ſaid the exulting Arthur, pointing to the altar, "muſt you invoke the inſpiring power." "Yes, he is the ſource!" cried Caroline, preſſing her roſary with one hand, and with the other leading Henry forward, then kneeling down with all humility, but with returning force, as if beſtowed from above:—"HE IS THE SOURCE!" repeated ſhe, "from whence every evil has been averted, or ſuſtained—and from whence every good has been derived." "Bleſſed and adored be that ſource for ever!" exclaimed the monk, croſſing his hands upon his boſom, as he proſtrated himſelf, and bowing before the ſhrine with the moſt profound reverence; the auditors did the ſame, repeating his words: "It is in this ſacred place then—in this ſacred attitude, that the ſubſtituted vows of Caroline ſhall be heard and ſanctified," exclaimed the monk.

 Then

Then Arthur laid his hand on their heads, breathing over each of them a prayer, which was not without a power derived from the ſource he ſupplicated. In that moment John Fitzorton, and Charles Stuart, who had placed themſelves on each ſide of the chief objects of the benediction, roſe up—advanced yet nearer the altar, and joined the hands of Caroline and Henry; bleſſing both and uniting them for ever.

But in the good old Denniſon, the youthful Floreſco, and the worthy apothecary, it was an event that annihilated all words in ſenſation, even as it had operated in the bliſsful ſilence of the lovers. In True George its effects were accompanied by emotions ſo ſtrong, that had they not found mitigation in a ſhower of tears, which came to his relief as the brothers pronounced the bleſſing, he might have fallen a martyr to genuine, but inſupportable joy.

By the friendſhip which ſubſiſted between the Biſhop of Cherbourg, and the pious

Father Arthur, the cuſtomary term of reſidence was ſhortened, and the marriage ſolemnized, with all the forms of the catholick religion.

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## CHAPTER XXXII.

### THE CLOUD REMOVED.

ON returning from the church, where the ceremony was performed, Partington, with Mrs. Herbert and Johanna, who had been apprized of all the circumſtances, by letters from the Lieutenant, arrived in time to receive the bride and bridegroom at the door of the abbot's houſe, and a meeting of more genuine ſatisfaction can never have been witneſſed in the annals of mankind. But in happineſs, as in grief, the additional drops which may be poured into the cup when we ſuppoſe it incapable of holding more, fully prove how incompetent mortals

mortals are to decide upon the power of human minds; or to meaſure the proportions they may be called upon, either to enjoy or to endure.

A conference with Father Arthur had excited in the Biſhop of Coutance, his ancient friend, ſo warm an intereſt in the happineſs and future fortune of Henry and Caroline, that to teſtify his reſpect for their ſufferings and their rewards, he expreſſed an earneſt deſire to receive them at his palace, accompanied by the reſt of their party. The prelate's wiſhes were conveyed by the monk, whoſe virtues have ſo much enriched this hiſtory, and the happy, yet grateful Henry, not knowing how far viſit to a catholick biſhop might be agree able to the proteſtant part of his company, nor preſuming to make his own converſion a rule of faith to others, looked to his brother for a reply. "I truſt," ſaid John, kindly anſwering to Henry's look, "we can have but one opinion as to the invitation of a venerable man, who ſeeks to increaſe the accumulating honours

of that virtue, which has been tried and found faithful—a man who is alſo the friend of Father Arthur: whom, indeed," added the Colonel, "my unjuſt ſuſpicion has again ſo wronged, that I can hardly deem myſelf a fit aſſociate; and ſhould feel that I ought to baniſh myſelf from being of the party, did I not know, that I ſhould thereby rob ſo revered, though ſo outraged, a friend of half the pleaſures of a forgiving ſpirit." John bowed with true humility, and bluſhed with generous conſciouſneſs. "My ſon! my benefactor!" anſwered Arthur, "your conjectures were highly coloured by circumſtance, and your reſiſtance to apparently undue authority exerciſed on the will of your brother, in two of the moſt important concerns of his life—his affection, and his faith—was even a fraternal duty. With the laſt aweful concern I have nothing to do: with the former I ſhould not, perhaps, have ſo long delayed ſtating the ground on which I ſtood. I ſhould have removed your apprehenſions as to the nature of your brother's vows, and without equivoque have told

told you, that in imitating thofe which his Caroline had formed, he would act under your own fanction, of which a written proof had been fo recently received from you."

> 'For modes of faith let zealous bigots fight,
> 'His can't be wrong whofe life is in the right.'

Thus quoted Henry. "I think I have often heard you fay, you fine old caitiff," cried Partington, addreffing himfelf to Arthur, "that this fcoundrel of a bifhop, is much fuch another fellow as yourfelf. Let us go to his palace in a body, and fend fomebody to bid him expect our whole gang."

The invitation was accepted. And in order to render the homage to real virtue, which had paffed the ordeal, more diftinguifhed, the prelate had added to the party many of his own particular friends, yet had not the vifit been marked by fomething of yet greater import, to the honour and happinefs of the Fitzortons, it would have had no record in thefe pages.

After a repaſt which hoſpitality had prepared, and temperance had bleſt, the prelate invited his gueſts to a walk in the gardens of his palace; the ſcenery was of high natural beauty, and cultured with exquiſite taſte; ſeveral perſons were employed in watering the flowers—but they were as yet at a conſiderable diſtance, and their features indiſtinct. As the party drew ſomewhat nearer, they heard the perſons at work ſinging.—“Yes,” ſaid the good Biſhop to Henry and Caroline, who happened to be the neareſt to him, “that is their uſual way of ſweetning buſineſs with pleaſure.”—“Which ſhews their labours to be light,” interpoſed Henry. “I hope ſo,” ſaid the prelate, “but there is an exception to this general rule of happy induſtry among my peaſants. One of them, and dearer to me than the reſt, has never been known to raiſe her voice to ſongs of vivacity; although her notes of ſadneſs might vie with thoſe which grace the woes of ſorrow's bird. Yet ſhe toils—I wiſh her not to toil—more aſſiduouſly, and with

more

more content than any of the reft: but alas! fhe too often waters the plants with her tears, and I know not why." "And a female!" faid Caroline, drawing the back of her hand acrofs her own eyes. "And I fear an unhappy one," anfwered the Bifhop, "She came recommended to me by a brother, who is no more. Some myftery, however, involves her. It is about a year and an half ago, that fhe was bequeathed to my care. Her mind feems to require employment, and I, therefore, have fuffered her to bufy herfelf amongft the flowers. I wifhed it, indeed, to be amufement; fhe makes it labour. In all things fhe has diligence and tafte: yet fhe has capacities for higher culture: a fenfe—a natural fenfe and fenfibility too, of virtue and of religion. I fufpect fhe has loft a relation, or perhaps mourns my brother, who wàs a prototype of benevolence—or fhe laments, perchance, her abfence from her country. She is continually heaping the flower beds into hillocks, like graves, and then covers them

with the flowers new ſet. But ſhe has now made ſome progreſs towards clear perceptions of life and death, and holineſs and truth; yet her melancholy, though ſoftened, is not diſpelled. She has of late been touched by the example of the nuns, and wiſhes for a conventual life. She is no way gloomy or ſullen; but I have never been able to trace a ſmile on her countenance; and, if her grief continues, I have thoughts of indulging her as a novitiate in the convent of which my friend St. Seraphina is the ſuperior. That is the young woman now bending over the farther bed of roſes, and tying ſome of them up." "Alas! ſhe wants ſupport herſelf—her ſpirits are ſunk to the earth," ſighed Caroline. "She is not of Europe, you will perceive. But I cannot diſcover her myſtery," ſaid the Biſhop.

While he was giving theſe additional traits, and the company advanced nearer the object, a loud and piercing ſhriek burſt from Arthur's Indian, and another ſcream

from

from the female labourer, ſo loud and piercing it rent the air. In the next moment, the names of Floreſco and Zoraida were reverberated from the one to the other, with every mark of wild and ungovernable joy. They embraced—they proſtrated themſelves on the earth—they lifted up their hands towards heaven—they kiſſed the feet of the ſpectators—kneeled down with humility—ſprung np in extacy—and again embraced.—It was, indeed, Zoraida, the innocent idol and never-fading image of Floreſco's heart.

"My brother," ſaid the prelate, "returning from the weſtern plantations, where he had amaſſed a conſiderable fortune, had brought over three natives of the country in his ſuite, two of theſe died upon the paſſage, with many others of the ſable race belonging to the captain himſelf, an epidemy raging in the veſſel from the heat of the weather, and the cruel method of crowding ſo many human beings together in ſo narrow a ſpace. My poor brother himſelf lived only a few hours after his ar-

 rival;

rival; he yielded up his breath even before I could fee him; his corpfe, with the reft of his property, and this Indian girl, were conveyed to Coutance, and when I could acquire fortitude to attend to common affairs, I found amongft the papers of the deceafed the following note addreffed to myfelf:—' Faithful to me in fervitude, attentive to me in ficknefs, even to the expiring hour at which I write this, receive amongft my beft poffeffions the bearer hereof, the orphan Zoraida.'

" I can add little to this account, except that the moft docile and gentle manners, and a fomething of fadnefs, which her want of our language prevents her yet from explaining, had given me a fincere intereft to fee her more happy." " They will explain themfelves," exclaimed Arthur, " fee they are already telling to each other their fhort but faithful hiftory! Gracious Providence! how alike in their fates, their fortunes, and their feelings!—alike be their felicity! Leave them, I pray you, good my lord, a little to themfelves—they are of the

fame

ſame country, the ſame village, the ſame affection, and I am even more intereſted for them than yourſelf." "We are all intereſted," interpoſed the reſt of the party, "and if Zoraida be as valuable as Floreſco," ſaid the Lieutenant to the Biſhop, "your brother has bequeathed to you a treaſure indeed." Father Arthur then recited the brief ſtory of his ſable *protegeé*, which was ſo exact a counterpart of the good prelate's adopted, that although the different friends of the abbey and caſtle were thus drawn for a while out of themſelves, and they could hear only a repetition of a well-known tale, the new intereſt which the diſcovery had created, made them liſten to every circumſtance with the eagerneſs of affection.

Although Arthur had moved with his friends only a few paces, the ſable lovers appeared to have no conſciouſneſs of any thing but of themſelves. In the language of the heart, however, they had been abundant, pouring forth and exchanging that way every image and ſentiment of bliſs and

and rapture, with an ardour that caught the view not only of the Biſhop and his gueſts, but of the peaſants who had gathered near; at length Floreſco drew from a pocket-book, with which True George had preſented him, the work of Jane Atwood's own hands—not only the remains of his beloved's letter with all its fond repairs, even thoſe precious pieces which had been victims to his tenderneſs, and had been mended by Denniſon, but he preſented her with an anſwer written with his own hand—the achievement of many a toilſome hour, and interrupted by a thouſand occupations, a thouſand protracting incidents. Zoraida received it with joy, and gave to it a reſidence neareſt to her palpitating heart. The ſacred piece of ſhawl, another treaſured memorial, was next produced, and delivered to her whoſe boſom it had once warmed and guarded — on that faithful ſhrine it now again was placed, and tears of extacy fell faſt upon it. Children of nature! their wonder, and their bliſs, were alike unſpeakable. But who that ſaw them

them would have wifhed for, or wanted words to explain that their eloquent and common mother had never given life or love to any of her offspring more true to her emotion?

When utterance was reftored; they converfed in their own native tongue, and their difcourfe ran thus: "Deareft Zoraida lives for her Florefco."—"And Florefco for Zoraida," anfwered the enraptured maid; then taking each other by the hand they ran as if infpired by one idea, to the place where their patrons were grouped, and proftrating themfelves before the Bifhop and the Monk, croffed their hands on their bofoms, kiffed the ground near which their benefactors ftood, and fhewed every fign of gratitude.

The Bifhop and his friends were extremely moved at this meeting of the lovers, and we truft that our readers, in good will to poor Florefco, will not deem the time loft which they have beftowed on him and his Zoraida.—Even Henry and Caroline received from it an increafe of that hap-

pinefs

pinefs which ftill warmed the centre of their hearts from the no lefs unexpected recovery of one another—a happinefs which nothing but fuch an event could poffibly have augmented.

Father Arthur, who for reafons formerly ftated, believed the partner of his beloved domeftick's heart was no more—felt even a paternal joy, as at the return of a daughter to his arms. He expreffed this to his mitred friend, of whom, before he left the palace, he obtained permiffion to number Zoraida amongft his children. "Be it fo," anfwered the bifhop,—"I confide her to your care: were fhe, indeed, my daughter, I fhould not hefitate to place her under fuch protection—aware as I am that her virtue now, and her reward hereafter, will fuffer nothing by invefting him at the fame time with full powers to difpofe of her as he thinks proper. In this too I fhall fulfil part of my dear brother's dying requeft, in granting an afylum to the orphan Zoraida; for thus fhall I provide for her a father, and a hufband. But," continued the Bifhop, "another

"another part of my duty to her, and to my brother, ſtill remains. Had it pleaſed heaven to allow time for a more regular diſtribution of his fortunes, this object of his regard would have had her ſhare: his benevolence would have completed what his pity began. Look then to me for the arrangement of her worldly good, and you, my venerable Arthur, ſhall be inſtructed as to my deſigns on this head, in which the late happy incident has made no ſort of alteration."

While this treaty of loving kindneſs was negociating betwixt the biſhop and the monk, on their return into the houſe, Henry and Caroline, Johanna and Charles, were made ſpectators of a ſcene not leſs intereſting. Partington and the apothecary had informed the aſſociates of Zoraida of her happy rencontre, and its probable conſequence, and unwilling that her companions ſhould be no way the better, or the merrier on the occaſion, Partington, in the firſt inſtance, ſet them all dancing upon the green; he himſelf opening the ruſtick gambols. They had received

received general orders to preſent noſegays to the Biſhop's gueſts on their leaving the garden, and had been gathering the choiceſt flowers of the ſeaſon for their maſter's preſent company. Theſe the merry-hearted Squire diſtributed with ſome judgment, giving, for inſtance, laurels to Henry, and myrtle to Caroline—and, running with Floreſco and Zoraida to another part of the garden, demanded the aid of True George to ſtick that ſtill exulting and ardent couple in the midſt of a groupe of ſun-flowers: at length not making them comprehend the ſpirit of his amicable abuſe, which, however, he was too happy to reſtrain, he finiſhed his frolick by gliding money into every palm while he was ſhaking hands, and then with the delighted apothecary, whoſe heart always reflected the joy of others, returned into the palace; where, indeed, the reſt of the party had gone ſome time before. John Fitzorton alone remained. He had placed himſelf, not in ſullen ſolitude to avoid the ſight or the ſound of the happy, but where both his eye

eye and ear might be gladdened: yet great and manifold revolutions had paſſed his mind: he was ſometimes forced upon the thought of theſe, even in the gayeſt moments of the ſocial joy, or ſoft endearment of thoſe he loved: and not to caſt even a paſſing cloud on theſe, he would ſtep aſide without ſeeming to part company, ſhade himſelf awhile from the too intenſe obſervation of others, and if a ſigh or a tear from reflection forced their way, it heaved unheard, and fell unſeen, and generally in the next moment he joined his friends, and all was well. He had ſelected on this occaſion his own bouquet, as he ſaw others gathering—and following an innocent thought, drawn from times long paſt, but freſh in his recollection, he made up as nearly as the flowers would allow ſuch an aſſemblage as had been preſented to Olivia on the anniverſary of her birth. He pauſed a few minutes to place them as they then were arranged, and as again he ſlowly moved on he preſſed them on his boſom—but as he reached the palace door at which

Henry

Henry and Caroline were ſtanding with joined hands, he held the flowers in a poſition ſo as to prevent any notice of their arrangement as he paſſed, and then diſpoſed of them to his ſatisfaction—for they were that night ſtrewed on his pillow.

Yet none of the company had received more heart-felt delight from the meeting of the Indian lovers than John Fitzorton. The evening was paſſed at the palace with the higheſt ſocial enjoyment: when the gueſts were parted, Zoraida was cloſetted with the Biſhop, from whom ſhe received permiſſion to accompany the protector of her faithful admirer; and the next morning he delivered her, with his own hand, to her new guardian—having previouſly explained all his generous deſigns. He then embraced the whole party, and bade them farewell.

# CHAPTER XXXIII.

## FINAL ARRANGEMENTS.

WE feel ourſelves called upon, however, at this criſis, to take a ſummary view of the conduct of Caroline Stuart in the late tranſactions at the convent. The votary of eternal retreat had returned to ſociety : ſhe had returned almoſt from the altar of immortal love, to the altar of human paſſion ; and it was CAROLINE STUART who had done this. Her juſtification muſt be ſanctioned by every aweful power ; and it behoves us to take care that, by our inadvertence, we do not leave her expoſed to the cenſure either of having lightly ſought, or lightly left, her ſacred aſylum.—She quitted not human ſociety in diſguſt, nor with a deſign to bury herſelf in the gloomy caverns of inacceſſible ſolitude ; forgetful, or affecting to forget, that the world ſtill held objects deſerving her love. The paths ſhe had deſerted had innumerable

merable flowers, mixed with countlefs thorns: all the former fhe had endeavoured to twine into wreaths for her deareft friends; but, left one of the latter fhould find its way into their bofoms, fhe gathered them all in her own—all that, alas, fhe could remove—and fled with them, where they might no more be heard,—no more be feen; yet, even in the bofom of folitude, ftern and eternal, and with many of the fharpeft of thefe thorns in her own heart, fhe taught the cloifter to bloom. During her noviciate, her regularity, her gentlenefs, her wifdom, her talents, had foftened the unneceffary rigours of a monaftick inftitution.—Her harp, her lute, her voice, had been the folace of the forrowful, and had elevated the joy of the happy. The nuns, the fifters, the fuperiors reforted to her for fortitude, for comfort, for occupation; and though the facred hymn fucceeded to the fong, the harmony of Caroline loft nothing by the afcenfion of her notes from earth to heaven. In fine, fhe had communicated joy to all around her: a purer piety, a firmer faith, a meeker refignation

resignation reflected from her example; she had made content a resident of the convent, and in bidding farewell to her cloister, she had obeyed the same voice which summoned her to enter it,—the voice of faith, of virtue, and of God!

There now remained nothing to be adjusted at Coutance, but the parting visit of Father Arthur to the convents. Caroline seemed to wish she might be permitted to accompany him to the visitation, but in this she suffered herself to be over-ruled by the tender and transported Henry. The monk, therefore, blended her kindest wishes to the abbess, and to the nuns, with his own, and brought back in return the most cordial felicitations to their favourite Caroline, and her whole party. On the evening of the same day, being informed that a vessel, with good accommodations, might be hired for England, the happy groupe took their leave of Normandy; and without meeting any thing to interrupt their too-often thwarted enterprizes, they regained

regained the coaſt of Albion, and proceeded to their family manſions, where the reſt of their friends had fondly been expecting them.

Thus, after all their trials, and, we truſt, as irreproachable conduct under them as mortals, in this mixed and imperfect ſtate, can hope to attain, were Henry Fitzorton and Caroline Stuart brought together. Yet, ſeveral of the events that led to their union were ſo diſaſtrous, and one in particular, the death of Olivia, ſo ſincerely regretted, even by the parties to whom it gave the freedom of choice, that nothing but ſuch a ſucceſſion of great and unexpected bleſſings could have produced the felicity which was, at length, eſtabliſhed, as well in the perſons of Caroline and Henry, as in the mutual friends and relatives of both. Time, however, who has been juſtly repreſented by a great writer as having a wallet at his back, in which he puts ſcraps for oblivion, by degrees ſoftened away the memory of paſt images of diſtreſs, leaving only

only impreſſions which the mind either contemplates with a melancholy pleaſure, or a moral advantage.

The ſuſpended ideas of happineſs to ſome, and of reſignation to others, of the families and friends of the abbey and of the caſtle, at length returned. The remaining enemies of both houſes had all been properly diſpoſed of. The treachery of the elder Otley was ſeverely puniſhed, as we have ſeen, by a tremendous death, and by the hands of thoſe who corrupted him. His corrupters, Valentine Miles, Nicholas Dabble, the younger Otley, with ſeveral of their accomplices, male and female, were, in purſuance of their ſentence, duly executed. The reader may remember that John Fitzorton, to appeaſe the diſappointed multitude, predicted that the next gathering together of the ſame culprits would probably be at the gallows. The prophecy was at laſt fulfilled to very general ſatisfaction. Of the turnpike-man and his wife the joy was complete; and, indeed, ſeveral of the banditti found a certain conſolation

derived from their mutual hate, even when they were on the ſcaffold, to perceive their deſtiny the ſame. The ingenious Mr. Skuttle, the landlord of the Hand-in-hand, and ſeveral of his aſſociates were, for the firſt time of their lives, devoted to the ſervice of their country. Juſtice Barhim flouriſhed a ſhort time longer, and was, at length, aſſaſſinated by ſome of thoſe very rogues of whom he was ſo tenacious; but the indignant and ferocious Lady Tempeſt, rather from rage than ſhame, effected her own deſtruction. On the morning of execution, ſhe was found dead in her cell. Reſulting from theſe terrible, but juſt puniſhments of vice, the property and happineſs of virtue were more effectually ſecured. In the houſes, offices, and hiding places above and under ground, in various parts of the vaſt metropolis, appertaining to one or other of the delinquents, the indefatigable proſecutor, his judicial brother, and his learned friend, diſcovered divers falſe and extorted ſecurities and inſtruments, which, though they had paſſed and repaſſed through

ſeveral

ſeveral polluted channels, reverted at length to the firſt principal, and came back purified, to their proper ſource. Mr. Thomas, one of her ladyſhip's firſt loves, in proceſs of time, amuſed himſelf by an evening ride upon the road, and in an attempt to pillage and murder a fellow-traveller, was himſelf ſhot through the head. But to Jeputha, by whoſe means the firſt diſcovery of the banditti was made to Partington and his friends, who, as we have obſerved, was of manners leſs abandoned, and who had been forced into her criminal employments, and deſerted them in terror, his majeſty's pardon was extended.

Partington who had for ſome time ſuſpended his abuſive habits, in the ſerious and ſolemn ſympathies of his heart, reſumed himſelf, and again became rude of ſpeech to thoſe he beſt loved, and well-bred to ſuch as he deſpiſed. Of the former, Mrs. Herbert had become one of his moſt marked objects: her alacrity in carrying the broadſword and loaded gun to the coach, and her other heroic achievements for the gyp-

ſey expedition, made the firſt forcible impreſſion, for he averred that he did not at all doubt the fair caitiff would cut his old head from his ſhoulders, if he had the honour to be worthy thereof; and ſince that, the hiſtory of her attentions to the young Johanna, and what farther he had obſerved of her conduct during the ſickneſs of Mrs. Fitzorton, confirmed her conqueſt; and as ſhe was no leſs taken with the ſquire—whoſe mind ſhe could read, even through the diſguiſe of his humours and ſingularities,—it was agreed, that on condition the younger varlets conſented to make a general marrying day, the middle-aged Amelia and old Baſil Partington ſhould form the firſt couple. In due time this actually did take place, with a proviſo, only, on the part of John, which will preſently be ſtated.

True George was at length rewarded with the hand of his lovely Jane, and although the latter, even to the term of a long and reſpectable life, ſhewed a diſpoſition to penſive pleaſures, which ſeemed to ſpring

rather from impreſſion of early misfortune, than from conſtitutional gravity, it no way interrupted her being uniformly an endearing wife, and, in the general, a happy woman: both ſhe and her huſband, however, reſolved, on principles of real affection, to remain with Henry and Caroline; neither could any perſuaſion prevail with George to aſſume the title, although he accepted the office and labours of ſteward, while the good old Denniſon was alive: and it was with no better ſucceſs that an attempt was made to elevate the latter to a more abſolute independency; "As a ſteward he had lived, as a ſteward, God willing, he would die."

Partington perceiving a longer delay was likely to happen than he now thought neceſſary, determined to ſettle every thing after his own faſhion; "The caitiffs, exclaimed he, "will at this rate waſte their lives in preparing for its eſtabliſhment." He therefore ſummoned every body, above and below ſtairs, into the large hall of the Bury, but ſcarcely large enough to con-

tain the viſitors, and as ſoon as they were got together—" Good," ſaid he, " and now you ſhall ſee that I will pair ye off, ye ſhilly-ſhally vagabonds, as eaſily as I couple my terriers. This bleſſed day I have determined, that as I mean myſelf to become a ſlave to this oldiſh raſcal, none of ye ſhall be left at liberty to laugh at me." Here he tucked the arm of Mrs. Herbert under his own, and ſallied with her round the room, True George and Jane Atwood, Charles and Johanna, Floreſco and Zoraida, Goody Brabſon's Sally and William, Jerom and Jonathan, with the apothecary's two fair daughters--alſo, the ſon of the gypſey chief, and the pardoned penitent Jeputha, and, notwithſtanding a little reſiſtance on the part of the damſel, and a ſly look at True George, Rachael, and the young Sexton—" And if any more inſufferables," cried he, " of this our pariſh of Partington, or any ſpinſters and bachelors from the vicinity of the caſtle, or the abbey, who are now our gueſts, wiſh to do as we do, this is their opportunity—but there is

no

no time left to think about it, for to tell you the truth, we are waited for in the church, even while we are now ſpeaking."

In real truth, the Squire had waggiſhly preconcerted the whole ſubject with the rector of his pariſh, as to both the day and hour; and had cauſed it to be inſinuated, not only about his own pariſh, but into thoſe above-mentioned, proclaiming, that thoſe who wiſhed to pay due reſpect to Henry Fitzorton and Caroline Stuart,—of whoſe rencontre on the continent, and happy union, they were at the ſame time apprized,—would do well to repair to the Bury, where ſuch as were diſpoſed to marry, and were found to be right and true vagabonds to one another, would find a wedding dinner, and the charge of the ſpecial licences defrayed by their ſovereign liege ſcoundrel, the ſaid Partington. This edict brought together not only all the young, but all ſuch of the old as could endure the labours of the journey; for as it ſerved not only as an information of the union of Henry with the only lady whom

they deemed fit to ſucceed Olivia, but gave them an opportunity to pay their, perhaps, laſt duty to thoſe they moſt loved and honoured—moſt of Olivia's cottagers, and all Caroline's penſioners, embraced an occaſion ſo gratifying to their hearts; and with reſpect to the younger part, the Squire had given out that none but ſuch as were diſpoſed to follow his example in regard to marriage, would be deemed ſufficiently qualified for the invitation, and it would therefore be expected of all lovers to bring wedding rings in their pockets, and to put an end to all quarrels about ſighs, cruelty, &c. by going fairly and openly to church. It is incredible what numbers aſſembled; ſo many, indeed, that the feaſt intended for dinner did not take place until the ſupper hour. Partington led the way to the church, and was amongſt the firſt of thoſe who approached the altar, although he remained the laſt, preſerving throughout the ceremony a reverence of demeanour ſuited to the occaſion, and wholly different from his uſual behaviour. On their return from

the altar, they were introduced to Henry and Caroline, who received and returned the moſt heartfelt homage, and although, at the particular requeſt of Caroline, much of that gleeful merriment which Partington had plotted, was given up, an evening of more general, or genuine ſatisfaction and felicity has ſeldom been ſeen in this jarring world.

The penſioners and cottagers were continued on the liſt of Henry and Caroline; but as it was intended by that amiable pair, as well as Charles and Johanna, to reſide for ſome time abroad, and as the Colonel had ſignified his intention to return to the field, the care of all theſe objects of bounty devolved upon the good old Denniſon, who returned to the abbey; and True George and Jane Atwood, during the abſence of the family, were the guardians of the caſtle: little Fitz alſo, was to have a ſoft cuſhion in both theſe eventful manſions. Father Arthur with Floreſco, and Zoraida, whom the good man had united, took poſſeſſion of the chapel-houſe, with a reſerve of rooms

for them in both the caſtle and abbey, as fancy might direct. And while theſe points were ſettling, Partington proteſted, "that he was ſo much in the habit of living with his old caitiffs, that if his beloved ſcoundrel of a bride," affectionately careſſing her, "was of his way of thinking, ſhe would e'en join the vagabond party, and leave the old Bury to that grey-headed caitiff, Le Maitre, with the uſe of the woods and hedges to Blondel Gapper."

This propoſition being agreed to, arrangements were made accordingly, and Henry Fitzorton with his Caroline, little John and Carry, Charles and his Johanna, Partington and his Amelia, embarked for the continent, with intent to paſs the reſidue of the ſummer at Paris, the winter in the ſouthern parts of France, and the whole of the following year in Italy.

Meanwhile, reſigning with manly grace to diſpenſations, the wiſdom and benevolence of which he preſumed not to queſtion, John ſettled moſt of his worldly poſſeſſions in the manner he had all along intended, on his

Johanna, and on the children of Olivia, difposing of the reft fo as to teftify his remembrance of the worthy in whatever ftation of life. He once more girded on his fword, from the mingled motives that had already fo often urged him to the field. A war with Spain, when fome of our iflands were threatened with invafion, afforded the opportunity; and a braver or more experienced officer could not have been entrufted with the wealth or glory of his country: victorious alike in the fenate and the camp, he was promoted to the rank of General, in the direct line of afcent; for none other would John Fitzorton have accepted.

No lefs active, nor of lefs fervice to his country, the refpectable James had yearly continued to illuftrate the important advantages derived both to the individual and to the community, by preferving the *golden mean*. In one fteady tenour of principles, of integrity, and of perfeverance, he ftill maintained the peace and order of his own mind, and of fociety. Happy from difpofition and from events, he had effected this

without having ſuffered any peculiar miſfortune of body or of mind, without being impeded in his progreſs to fame, fortune, or felicity, by any of thoſe paſſions which frequently extinguiſh the deſire, and ſometimes annihilate the principle, that leads us to be of uſe either to ourſelves or others. He neither encountered nor created one incident that Henry would have called an adventure, or John looked upon as an object of conflict; and yet he wooed, and yet he won. In that part of the human day, which lying preciſely betwixt its blooming morn and fading eve, may truly be called its noon, James Fitzorton, as if deſtined in all things to be the medium, ſought and ſecured the affections of a very amiable woman,—the daughter of a brother judge,—with whom he lived in a ſtate of uninterrupted confidence and tranquillity: a ſtate which we are nevertheleſs aware, few of our heroick readers will envy, many will think inſipid, and upon which, every lover of adventure will look down from the ſummit of a romantick heart with the moſt

chivalrick ſcorn; yet in ſpite of all theſe grand diſdains, the lofty character of a ſafeguard of the publick, to whom is confided the property and lives of his fellow-citizens, and the endearing offices of neighbour, friend, and brother, huſband, father, and chriſtian, have never been ſuſtained with more unvarying rectitude; and if the rectitude of his illuſtrious brothers was preſerved under temptations more numerous and ſevere; if a keener feeling of joy, from more acute ſenſation, ſometimes attached to the character of Henry, were not the moments of ſuperior felicity purchaſed by days and nights of agonizing ſorrow? —and did it not call for a philoſophy and a life of boſom-contention, rigorous as that of John, to keep reaſon on her throne? Yet ſo variouſly are we formed, that whoever holds his principles uncorrupt, will, probably, like *all* theſe brothers, have a more equal ſhare of happineſs, however unequally dealt out, and certainly be all entitled to the veneration and love of their fellow creatures.

At

At length, Henry and Caroline, with their attendant friends, after having paſſed four years, two more than they intended, from home, arrived at Fitzorton caſtle, where the brothers, John and James, with the bride of the latter, were aſſembled to receive them, and where they intended to paſs the ſummer. The tender ſenſe of times paſt remained; yet, as the General now felt diſpoſed to paſs the reſt of his days in the boſom of retirement, and as there was no longer a wall of ſeparation between the abbey and the caſtle, Henry and Caroline reſided at the former, and the General and Olivia's children at the latter. The Lieutenant ſtill intended to reſume his long-neglected profeſſion; but, as his Johanna felt herſelf more at home under the protection of her guardian and friends during her huſband's abſence, ſhe agreed to paſs part of her time at the abbey, and part at the caſtle.

The return of Henry and Caroline was celebrated with univerſal joy; and that ſhare of merriment which was repreſſed at the

the Bury, on the general wedding day, now burſt forth; the abbey had reſumed its former dignity; it was reſtored to magnificence, and purified by virtue; the feet which had receded ran towards it; the eye that had ſurveyed it with abhorrence as the carouſal of vice, or with alarm, as the haunt of obſcene ſpectres, now again gazed upon it as a place redeemed;—as a ſanctuary conſecrated anew. Father Arthur, his Indian pair, Denniſon, and all but little Fitz, who had breathed his laſt in a good old age, were found even happier and healthier than they had been left. Old Gaffer and Gammer Atwood were alive, and were on a viſit to their daughter, and her happy huſband, when Henry came home.—The turnpike-man, honeſt Blondel, and all of whom the reader of this hiſtory can wiſh to hear pleaſant tidings, were in health, and diſtributed ſome at the caſtle, ſome at the abbey, ſome at the manor-houſe, and the reſt at the Fitzorton arms. The jubilee continued ſeveral days,—and a great evening, in which all were to aſſemble previous to ſeparation,

ration, was appointed. This, alſo was to be conducted by Partington, who declared he was happier than he had ever been in his life. The ancient hall of the abbey was the place of meeting—and although Henry, Caroline, Charles, and Johanna, appeared, only becauſe gratitude demanded their preſence for a moment, they withdrew to ſcenes of leſs noiſy joy; they were, indeed, bleſt in their fondeſt wiſhes, but they felt a pious decency that at once chaſtened, and attempered their ſatisfaction, while they remained ſo near the ſpots where ſuch a variety of aweful events had happened to themſelves and their connexions: indeed, after the trial of a few months, they meditated an exchange of the abbey or manor-houſe, with Partington, for the Bury as a general reſidence, and only came down in future once a year. The General's principal arrangements were as follow:—to indulging himſelf in the ſociety of Johanna, and the education of Henry's ſon and daughter, the firſt of whom was given up to his affectionate care, while young Caroline, who preſented

to

to him an image of her ever-remembered mother, was consigned to his Johanna. They were both trained to, and comfirmed by, the church of England; while the children of Henry and Caroline, should any be the result of their union, were to be cultured in the tenets of their lovely mother, and which the father had thought proper to adopt. These divisions of faith in families are, indeed, always, more or less, to be regretted: but when they proceed from principles, not from passions; from steady faith, not from capricious change, and produce a life pure and holy, differing only in the modes of that faith, who shall presume to boast of exclusive rectitude?

The day after the general rejoicings, the happy guests departed for their several places of abode in the very content of their souls. Mr. and Mrs. Partington for the present, returned to the Bury; Gaffer and Gammer Atwood to their untroubled cottage; Jerom and Jonathan, with their brides, to farms on the Squire's estate:

who continued to appropriate all the Atwoods except Jane, and ſhe—ſo ſtrange are the revolutions of life,—became at length a reſident with Henry and Caroline,—a no leſs ſingular event—at Guiſe abbey. The Lieutenant and Johanna paſt a month with the General, who deſired to ſettle ſome matters for their future good—and True George had ſo much to engage him for ſome time at both houſes, that he was alternately an inmate of one and the other.

For a ſhort time, therefore, Henry and Caroline, Jane and Denniſon, were left to themſelves; and happy as they were in each other, and in the love and friendſhip of all who ſurrounded them—they did not feel it inconſiſtent with that happineſs to paſs much of the day that ſucceeded their grand feſtival,—the firſt of their tranquillity,—not with the living but the dead. The church of Fitzorton, and the chapel-houſe of the abbey, had a ſacred claim on the affections of all: but when Henry left his companions for a while in the latter, and entered the former alone, he was at once pleaſed

pleafed and moved to fee John already bending over the urn of Olivia. The brothers did homage at the tomb of virtue, and were foon joined by the votaries from the chapel: and as they rofe from their devotions it was to embrace each other.— "My Caroline," faid Henry, as they were returning home, "wherefore fhould we again quit thefe fcenes?—do not thefe penfive fweets form a part of our felicity? we are here methinks, under the immediate miniftry and protection of kindred cherubim! Let us believe that we are in their charge, and they our guardians." "Ah! be the reft of our lives paft under their heavenly guidance!" faid Caroline.— "Bleffed, bleffed thought!" cried Jane. "Do, dear your honours, let us live and die here," exclaimed Dennifon, "even where our friends were made angels."

The idea of departed friends changed into guardian fpirits, was innocently adopted; the very air and earth were confecrated; from that moment new fources of happi-

nefs

neſs opened. Thus the caſtle and the abbey became holy ground; nor did they ever leave it more.

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